NEWSTATESMAN SOCIETY

9 November 1990
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Impaled on Europe: R W Johnson on Thatcher's nemesis

Interviews: Scorsese, Lubetkin, Heiner Müller

Books special:
Jenny Diski
Richard Hoggart
George Melly
Tony Parker
Ian Jack
Fleur Adcock
David Widgery

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Privates on parade

Pretty plain-clothes police are arresting gay men for allegedly masturbating in public toilets. Who's wasting whose time?

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9 November 1990 Vol 3 No 126
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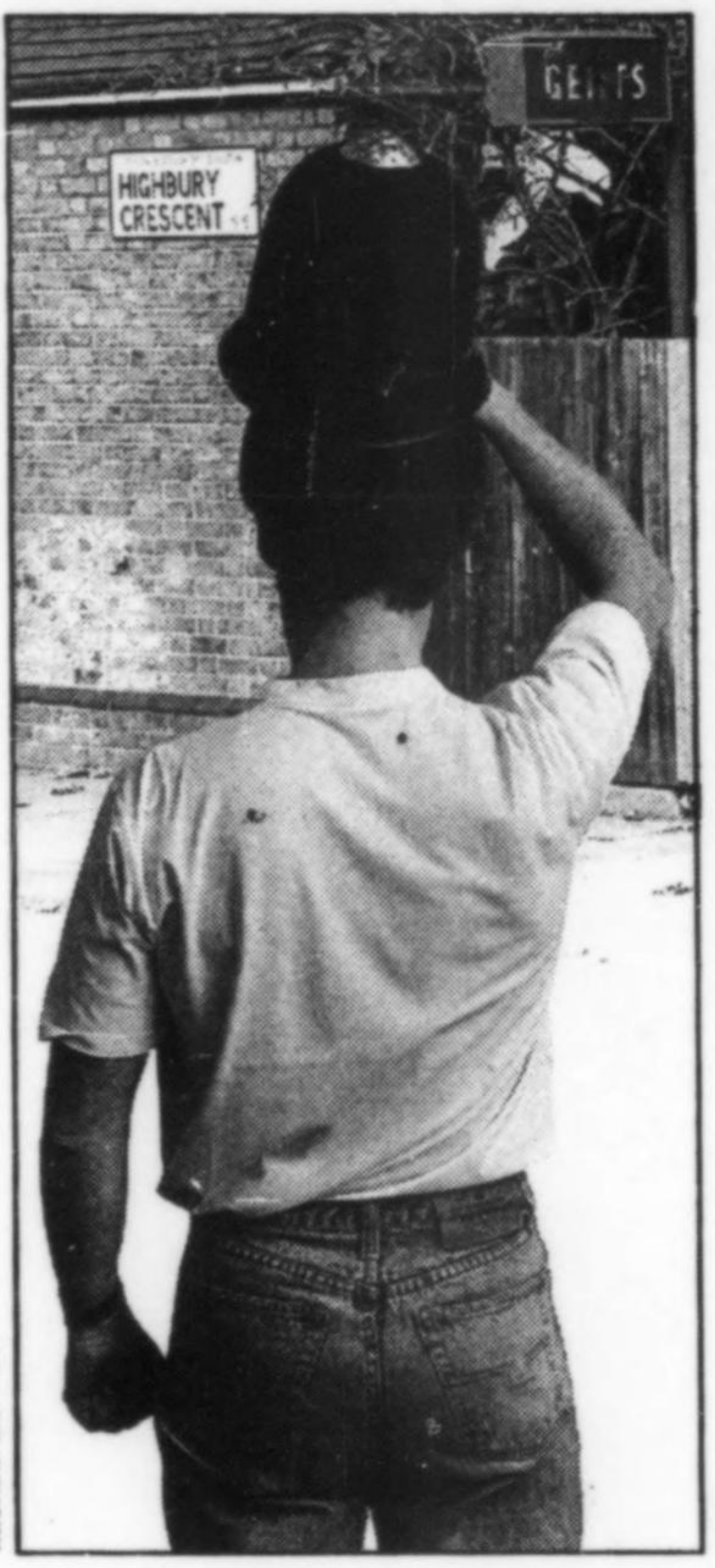

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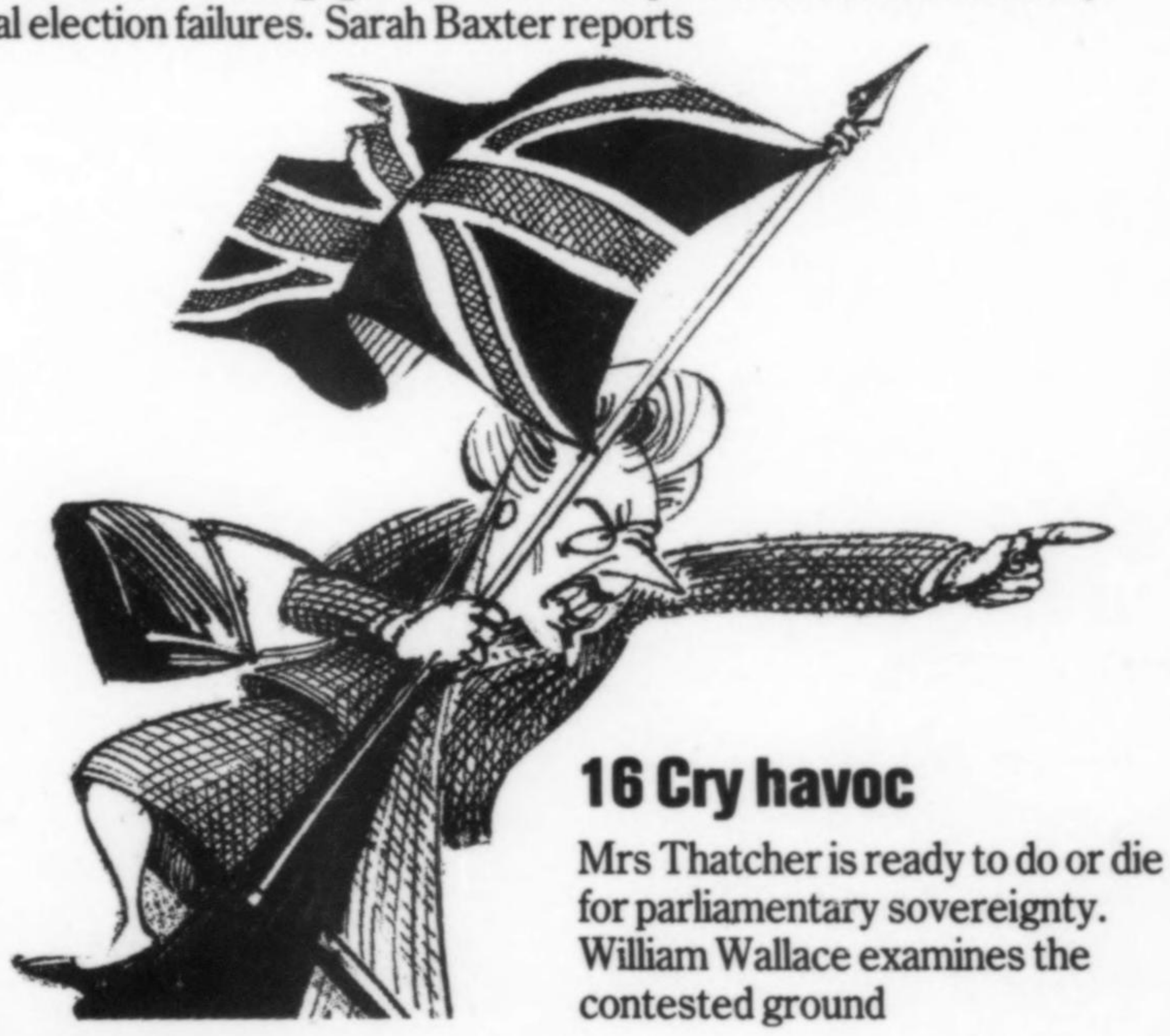

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LETTERS

The coo's tail

How pleasant to know that Stuart Weir would vote SNP if he lived in Galloway ("Split loyalties", 26 October). He should realise that the SNP is not just an *à la carte* choice on the anti-Tory menu, but a determined, radical party aiming to take Scotland out of the Union with England and into an independent status within Europe. We aim to convert Labour supporters to SNP supporters on a programme more committed to Scottish interests, and more left wing, than anything Labour will offer.

Tactical voting, between Labour and Liberal Democrats in England, makes sense if the aim is to get Thatcher out of office. But, the electoral battle north of the border is between Labour and ourselves. We believe that the Kinnockisation of Labour, our own new-found unity and our sharpened political edge under Alex Salmond have put us within striking distance of our objective. And that is not just to get Mrs Thatcher out of Downing Street, but also to get Downing Street off Scotland's back. To achieve this, we need to wrest the leadership of the Scottish people from Labour, not to sink our differences in an anti-Tory bloc.

Two years ago, the *NSS* was the only London publication to take Scottish affairs seriously. But, when the SNP pulled out of the Constitutional Convention, the story became too complicated for the *NSS*. But now, with Alex Salmond's proposal for a preferential referendum on the convention's proposals, independence in Europe and the status quo, the SNP is back at the centre of the constitutional debate in Scotland.

Will the *NSS* let its readers know about this? Will it inform them about the SNP's new leader, Alex Salmond? Will it tell them that the SNP has made the running in Scotland on the key issues of the poll tax and the steel industry? Or will it go on trailing behind events, as my mother would have said, "like the coo's tail"?

Bob Purdie
Ruskin College
Oxford

Editor's note: The *NSS* has prepared an article on Alex Salmond which will be published shortly.

Among the ashes

Sean French is wrong: crematorium staff do *not* remove pacemakers from bodies (Diary, 26 October). The Federation of British Cremation Authorities forbids any interference with coffin or body. The coffined body is put into the cremator exactly as it is received, cremated alone, and the ashes recovered and stored separately. Pacemakers would have been removed at the hospital or mortuary.

Any precious metals among the ashes are recovered and sold periodically; the funds are donated either to charity or to the upkeep of Gardens of Remembrance. The myth of the radioactive ring is just that—part of the folklore surrounding cremation.

The Cremation Society does all it can to ensure that funeral by cremation is carried out in a manner that does not upset the bereaved, which is why Sean French should be corrected.

Skip Murphy
London NW3

Conscientious objectors

By voting Labour, what I call "conscientious tactical objectors", can determine the next election. These are people who want to change the electoral system and would sacrifice their right to vote for their preferred party in order to achieve it.

It would be a tragedy if they allow another term of minority-supported Tory government because Labour cannot bring itself to declare in favour of electoral reform ("Split loyalties", 26 October). In the long term, we need a system that allows British voters to vote honestly, without weighing up which party is more likely to oust the party they most dislike.

The Labour Party has already moved. The historic vote at Blackpool, on 4 October, has broken away from the uncritical, bipartisan support of first-past-the-post with the Conservative government. The working party set up by Labour's National Executive has Westminster elections on its agenda. Labour has to do its homework now and go into the general election open to electoral reform, and be willing to discuss it in the Commons when in government.

It will prove to those who want not just a change of government but also a change in the way government is elected, the way it behaves between elections, and people's ability to influence government, that Labour is different. Labour's unambiguous commitment to democracy is important for it to win their votes. In politics, the conjunction of principle and self-interest is very powerful. With an idea whose time has now come Labour cannot fail. What could it possibly lose, except the chance to govern as we have been governed for the past 11 years?

Mary Georghiou
York

Gay prejudice

Howard Brenton asks: "What is it about the English cultural tradition that does for so many political artists?" ("The good between us", 26 October). His answer? "In English culture there is a Chinese wall between the aesthetic and the political." Unfortunately, by his third paragraph, Brenton has run smack into a wall of his own making.

Oscar Wilde, Brenton informs us, was not ruined "because he was a homosexual". Excuse me? "It was not unknown for nineteenth-century gentlemen to have homosexual affairs." Really? Well, it was also not unknown for them and others to pay the ultimate price. Sodomy was made an offence, punishable by death, in 1533. Between 1800 and 1835, more than 80 men were executed for sodomy in England. In 1806, more men were executed for sodomy than for murder.

In 1885, MPs and peers had a rush of blood to the head and outlawed homosexuality altogether, the precise cause of Wilde's ruination. Wilde sought to defend himself by denying his homosexuality, the love whose name he dared not speak.

If Brenton really wants to demolish the walls inside his head, he could start by reading Neil Bartlett's meditation on what Wilde means to us today, *Who Was That Man?* He could get along to Gay Sweatshop's next show which, thanks to the philistinism he so despises, will be its last. I, meanwhile, shall take my leave, for I hear that a Greek boy waits without, astride the flanks of a steaming animal. It's probably a police horse...

Colin Richardson
London SE16

Symbollock?

I was very intrigued by the poor fellow you used for your cover on crack in Colombia (26 October). I found no clues to his strange condition inside, and couldn't make up my mind whether he was a pusher who had suffered through abuse of crack, or someone who had been cruelly punished for squealing or opposing the dealers. My wife tells me, rather superciliously, that he is symbolic—or should she have said, symbollock?

Peter Johnson
London SE3

Correction

Sincerest apologies to Greg Smith ("Traffik jam", 2 November) for implying that he personally was involved in the deaths of Russian soldiers in Afghanistan. The reference should have read: "...he was forced to convey the death sentence to two Soviet POWs."

Subscriptions

We have had reports of subscribers receiving their copies late again this week. We would be grateful for any information from you about recent difficulties.

Colin Ward is on holiday this week.

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The lady vanishes

Britain without Thatcher would be like Henley without Heseltine. Or would it?

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Acid house goes VIP; the price of being European; Stuart Cosgrove on men's tears

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Integration will provide no miracle cure for our economic ills. Paul Hirst argues that we will have to pay for European living standards with Continental-style performance and pay restraint

12 Nothing natural

The drift of current legislation is towards stripping lesbians of parental rights. Why? Jayne Egerton reports

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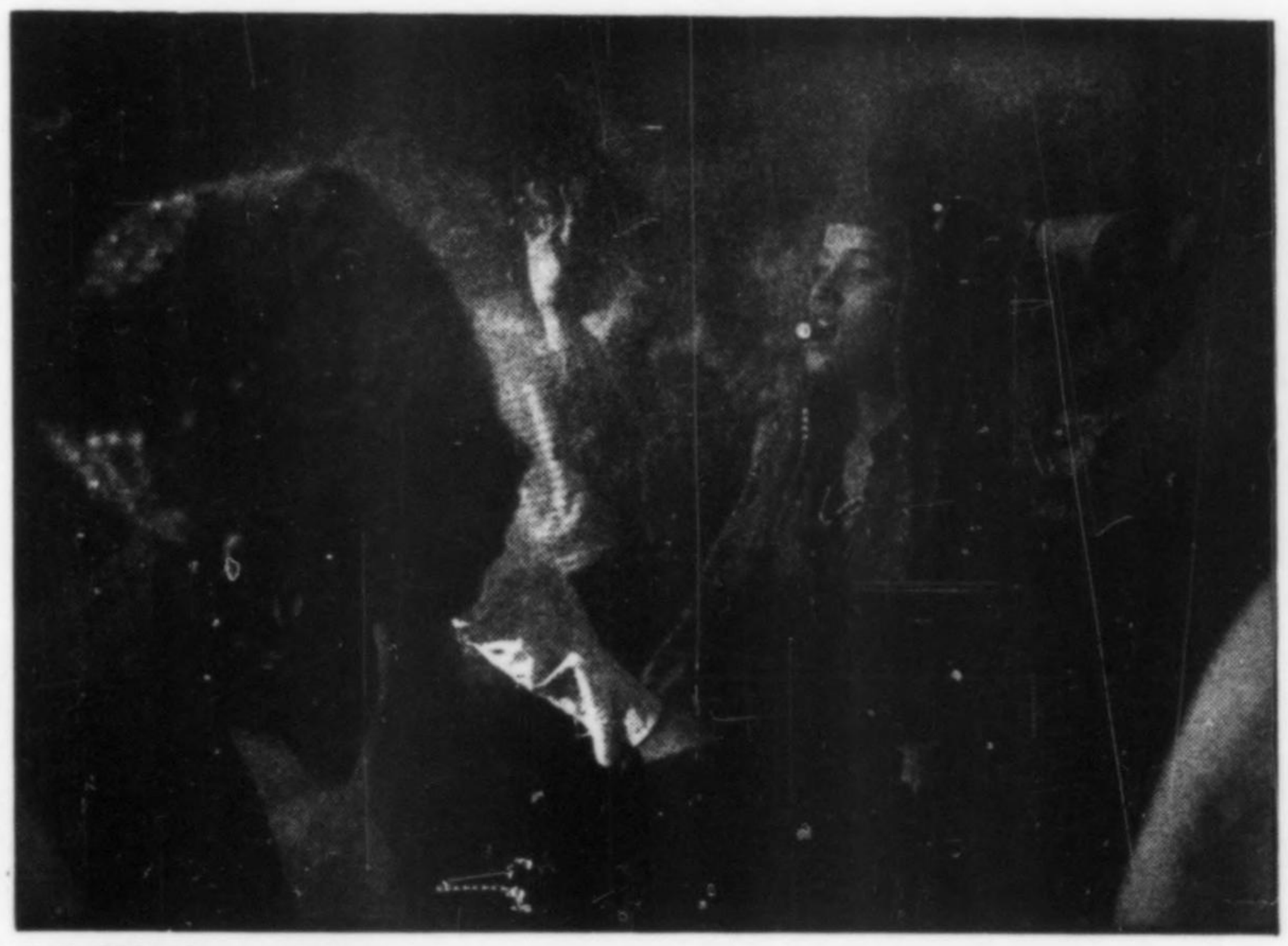
14 The man who would break up Britain

Alex Salmond, new leader of the Scottish National Party, talks to Kirsty Milne

16 Happy days

"Juvenile delinquents" are also *victims* of crime. It's tough being young, says a new survey


Mike Goldwater/Network

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What happens after the CIA and KGB install some new, user-friendly strongman in Iraq? A group of American writers and academics argue that capitalism in search of *lebensraum* will always bring us to some gulf of chaos

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Look at the harlequin: Michael Wood on Vladimir Nabokov's art of living
Gotcha!: Julie Burchill sticks up for the *Sun*
City limits: Marek Kohn on Berlin; Peter Jukes on Los Angeles
Angels and devils: the writing of Janet Frame and Kevin Coyne
Plus: Conor Gearty on free speech; visions of decadence

FRINGE BENEFITS

Subverting MK

Colin Ward

Back in the 1930s, when the Soviet government was inviting big names from the west to come and see, André Gide was asked by his hosts what he most liked about Leningrad. The old chap replied, "St Petersburg." When the new city of Milton Keynes was conceived, no one knew that there was going to be a huge shift in the English psyche from *neophilia* to *antiquarianism*.

Ask visitors what they like best about the place and they tend to name one of the old towns and villages it incorporates. They tell you about the two ancient inns of Stony Stratford, from which the saying "a cock-and-bull story" originated. If antiquity grabs them, they mention Bradwell Abbey, while the old railway town of Wolverton is a mecca for industrial archaeologists. They don't mention the vast, gleaming and unvandalised shopping centre in Milton Keynes.

Now I've known Milton Keynes ever since it was a mere twinkle in the eye of Fred Pooley, the then Bucks county architect. He realised that, superbly placed on road and rail traffic routes, it was the ideal site for an adventure in city-building. The endless sneers about the place that I've heard from people who take for granted an absolute freedom of choice about where *they* should live, drove me to keep my misgivings to myself. So I was delighted when, a few years ago, Jeff Bishop, architect and environmental psychologist, and a team from the School of Advanced Urban Studies in Bristol were hired by the ever-introspective development corporation to investigate what residents of MK thought about the place.

Hilariously, Bishop tells us that: "At the outset, the research team was told that people find MK confusing, and they get lost. This was patently not true of the residents, so what was the source of this rumour? A chance encounter provided the answer: that those who get lost seem to be predominantly visiting architects and planners who come with a preconceived idea of what clues and landmarks a 'city' should offer… and are then confused when such clues are not apparent."

Bishop's team found that: "MK *is* a success—to the extent that one might also add: *despite* the planners." Their findings "did not just cast doubt on the specific approaches used thus far in MK, but on the whole ethos of the planning and architectural professions".

In the 1970s, I interviewed dozens of MK citizens, and Bishop's survey confirms my impression that the work of the most prestige-laden architects in housing at MK—with the significant exception of Ralph Erskine—is liked least. The houses that most resemble our traditional picture of house and home are liked best.

Residents see themselves not as living in the new city, but in Linford or Heelands, for example, which are perceived as a series of "villages". They see MK "as somewhere only a little better than usual, a normal landscape dotted with villages". Shrewdly, Bishop notes the way that professional ideologies contain a set of perceptions of what is urban and what is rural, and that these are *threatened* by suburban and garden-city environments precisely because they are "symbols of individual aspirations rather than corporate ones".

Unlike almost any other MK voyeur, I find the new city overwhelmingly interesting. Why are there green avenues in the middle of its boulevards? Because 20 years ago, Walter Bor, the dear old planner, recognised that in the twenty-first century MK will need trams.

But I'm like André Gide. I chanced to be there on the right day for the MK Thursday market. Avenues of traders and hucksters were buying and selling everything. Slap in the middle of those boring old multinationals was the market scene you can see everywhere from Baghdad to Buenos Aires.

Indonesians, on the grounds that the US is involved in enough problems of greater importance overseas at present. The State Department has, we understand, instructed the embassy to cut down its reporting on Timor… Newsom's present attitude is that the US should keep out of the Portuguese Timor situation and allow events to take their course. His somewhat cynical comment to me was that if Indonesia were to intervene, the United States would hope they would do so 'effectively, quickly and not use our equipment'." (Munster and Walsh, *Documents on Australian Defence and Foreign Policy, 1968-1975*, 1980)

As the Kissinger leak reveals, use of US military equipment was a "problem", since 90 per cent of Indonesia's weaponry was from the US.

"Allowing events to take their course" has cost East Timor at least 200,000 lives, nearly a third of the population. To this day, the Indonesian presence is reviled. Armed resistance continues and the younger generation is in open revolt, forcing the Indonesians to step up their military presence.

To ignore the fate of East Timor as the US-UK alliance flexes its muscles for war against Iraq, in a crusade to free Kuwait, is quite simply criminal and hypocritical.

Carmel Budiardjo
The Indonesian Human Rights Campaign
111 Northwood Road
Surrey CR7 8HW

Intellectual insecurity

Ms Sherry Coldsmith tells us (Letters, 2 November) she has generally "enjoyed Suzanne Moore's film reviews in the past", but now wants her head on a platter over her piece on *Hardware*. By contrast, I have usually been left howling in disagreement by Moore's reviews but now feel compelled to write in her defence. In other words, may we please *not* have "a feminist film critic".

Or, at least, not in the sense which Ms Coldsmith seems to imply. There is a great deal of feminist writing in the *NSS*, which I have found sometimes enlightening, sometimes infuriating, always challenging and certainly not homogeneous. No doubt others, suffering Ms Coldsmith's rather nasty form of intellectual insecurity, would lumber "your readers" with other partisan purists: why not replace Colin Ward with a Maoist quoting the Little Red Book on the environment? Or swap Sean French for a Buddhist to explicate the Zen of nicknames such as *The Staggers*?

Surely the neurotic need to bar all but one's own voice is the first commandment only of the orthodox Onanist.

So, I hope I continue to find discussion and debate rather than doctrine and dogma in the pages of the *NSS*.

Tim Grana
London WC2

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Party like it's 1922

Who controls the Conservative succession?
Sarah Baxter probes the Westminster club

Is Green Growth a myth?; telephone datelines; tottering Tottenham

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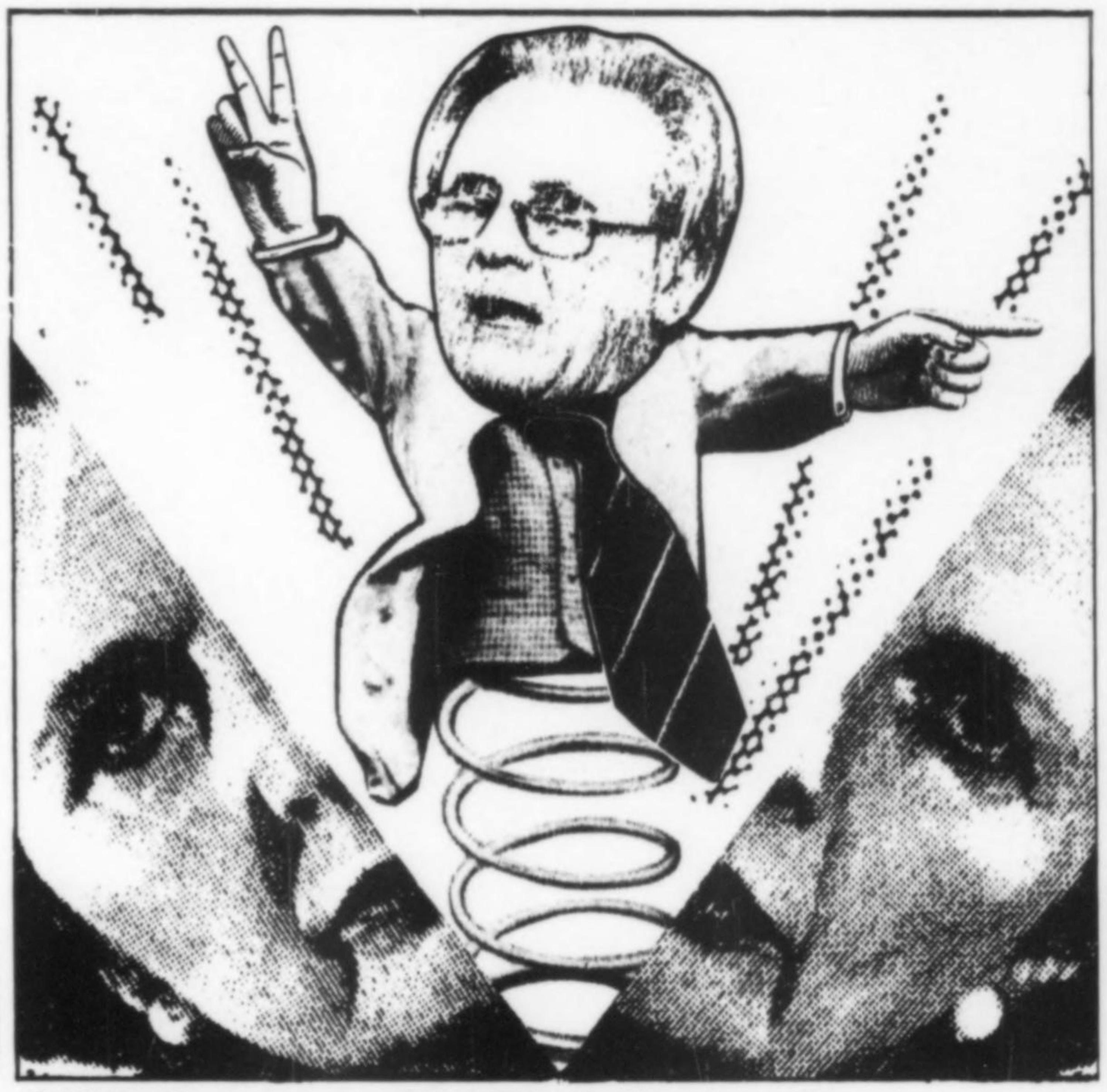

Paul Bateman

8 What comes after Thatcherism?

Long live Heseltinism, perhaps, or a hybrid "Heselockism" if Labour prevails? Bob Jessop can't spot much difference

10 Tottering Hotspur

Spurs fans won't let the boardroom players have it all their own way, reports Maria Manning

12 Tied up on the phone

Finding your heart's desire through a telephone dateline can be a frustrating and expensive experience, finds Richard Walker

Clare Jarrett

14 Environment special: green roots & red ends

NSS goes to the roots of greenness. Alexander Shankland reports on a bizarre election in the heart of the Amazonian rainforest; Sandy Irvine rejects the emerging eco-reformist consensus on green growth and sustainable shopping; plus, an *NSS* checklist of UK environmental problems; to close, Jeremy Seabrook asks what is this environment thing that we've rediscovered?

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Film: Travellers' tales
TV: The new age hits the screen
Art: Poland comes to terms with the past

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Notes from the underground: Christopher Hope on Russia's chaos and courage
Own goal: Adrianne Blue blows the whistle on a World Cup chronicle

Hughes on Van Gogh and others, p36

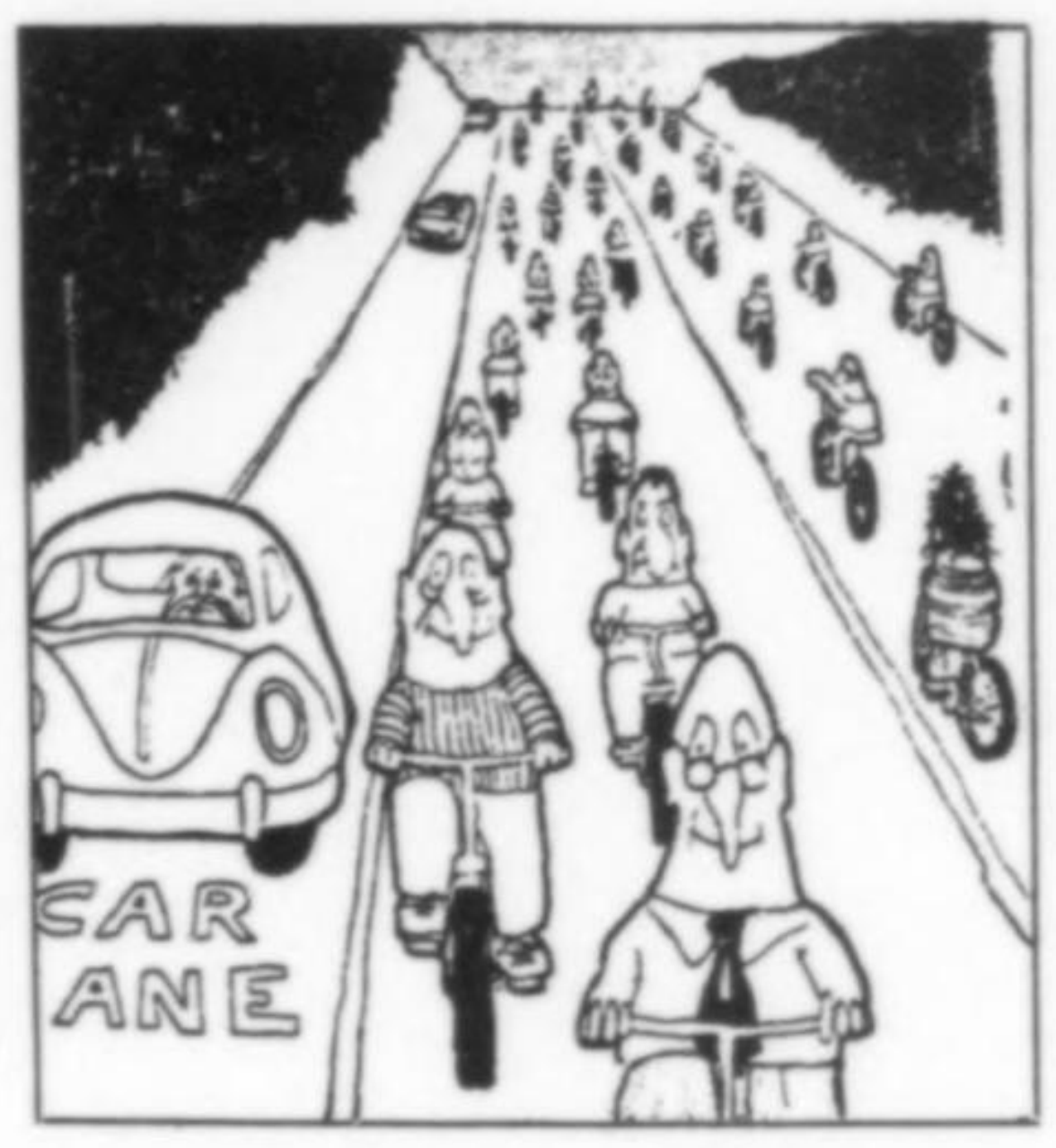
Strange new worlds: Anthony Quinn on Jonathan Raban's America; Geoff Dyer on Robert Hughes, scourge of modish modern art
Plus: the fiction of V S Pritchett and Sue Miller; books for the greenhouse; England after dark

FRINGE BENEFITS

Dutch treat

Colin Ward

This cartoon was published by the Department of Transport to indicate its priorities. Not, needless to say, in Marsham Street, but in The Hague. It's impressive to see how much further on the way to a viable transport policy for the twenty-first century the Dutch have travelled.



First, there are the railways. History favoured the Netherlands. Instead of a centralised autocracy, where everything happened in London or Paris and all routes converged on a single centre, they inherited a linear network of the autonomous free cities of the Middle Ages, each with a different national function. Randstad Holland, the densely populated ring of towns and cities is, in the jargon of geographers, the world's model of a polynucleated city region.

Like ours, its railway network is more than 50 years old; but, unlike ours, is the subject of continuous public investment. Fares are the second lowest in Europe, and it is taken for granted that half the cost of running the system is a public responsibility. It shows. When we arrived at Hook-of-Holland, there were waiting trains to everywhere. When we got back to Harwich on Sunday morning, BR was running coaches for ticket-holding London passengers. But we wanted to go in the other direction, to Ipswich, first stop on the cross-country boat train. Although shown on current timetables, this had been withdrawn as part of provincial cost-cutting. Wait 90 minutes and change at Manningtree. I don't blame BR. I blame its financial straitjacket.

Then there are the trams. We were the only people to pay the driver. Everyone else had strips of tickets that they folded and punched into a machine. We were told that they are cheap and can be used on trams, buses or underground trains anywhere in the country. The Netherlands has achieved something unknown in Britain: a nationally cooperating transport system. Back home, outside Blackpool and the Beamish museum, it's only the elderly who remember trams. Those noisy clanking monsters are history. Nothing to do with the smooth, quiet and quick three-car version in the rest of Europe.

As for those cyclists, it is well known that the Netherlands has a bigger proportion of bikes per head of population than anywhere else in Europe, although Sweden and Denmark are catching up. Public policy favours the bike, and there are well over 6,000 miles of cycle lanes, while bikes can be hired at more than 100 railway stations.

It was in Amsterdam in 1966 that Roel van Duyn and the Kabouters started their White Bikes idea. Pick it up where you are, and leave it at your destination. It failed, as the bikes were continually nicked by out-of-town people, but van Duyn is now a Green city councillor. Last week, it seemed to me that the biggest hazard for cyclists was not the motorists, as in Britain, but pedestrians who insist on walking in the cycle lanes.

In the 1970s, Dutch cities developed the concept of the *woonerf*, an area where deliberate narrowing of entrances, with humps and twists in the road, reduced car speeds to a walking pace, and gave absolute priority to children and pedestrians. It began in residential roads and, by 1988, *woonerfs* were replaced by *erfs*, applying the same principle to whole districts of cities.

These traffic-calming measures have been followed in every Dutch town and in West Germany, Denmark and Switzerland, with a predictable effect on road-accident statistics. Their extension depends on the degree of public support. Every motorist grumbles. But in the beautiful city of Delft, I learned that a zero rate of growth in car traffic had been achieved there. The next step, I was told, is to reduce it. The Dutch and their politicians, whether conservative, socialist or green, are agreed on making the attempt. How is it that we in Britain can't mobilise opinion to drag us into the post-motor age?

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under the present system.

Second, the kind of world-production binge fantasised by the free marketeers post-GATT and Europe 1992, is environmentally unsustainable in this increasingly global-warming-conscious world.

Last, mounting chaos, misery and upheavals will emerge from eastern Europe. The majority of the hapless populace will realise they have thrown off their communist yoke, only to be subjected to the chill, unforgiving, winds of a free-trade system that impoverishes, rather than enriches, the majority of them. Their reaction will, hopefully, lead to a fundamental reappraisal of this present unquestioning adherence to free trade.

Now, is it too much to hope that the *New Statesman & Society* will be one of the initiators of a debate to bring about such a rethink, rather than just publishing articles, and writing editorials, that only dance to the free marketeers' tune?

Colin Hines
Cardozo Road
London N7

THIS ENGLAND

£5 book tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please)

● The removal of a sculpture by Russell de Rozario from an exhibition in Luton Library last week has been referred to the National Council for Civil Liberties. The statue—showing Britain being ravished by an alien wearing a Margaret Thatcher mask—was removed after a complaint from a local Tory MP. Now one of de Rozario's supporters, Peter Wakeham, has taken the case to the NCCL.

"We believe this is an act of political censorship," said Wakeham. "It has been represented that the piece is about sex, but it was not sexual at all: it was a political reference to Mrs Thatcher screwing up the country."—*Times* (Derek Morgan)

● "After years of appealing to the snob side inside every chocaholic, After Eights are changing their image. Out will go the crusty lords and bejewelled hostesses of the television advertisements. Instead, jolly commercials featuring explorers and eskimos will promote the chocolate mints: "We're trying to bring our mints up to date," says a spokesman for the makers.—*Daily Telegraph* (George Moor)

● "In the interview, Major rebuts the story that his father was a tightrope walker. "He very nearly lost his sight when I was four or five. We used to walk together. I used to make sure he didn't trip over paving stones and that we got across the road safely."—*Times* (George Moor)

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The president has landed

What happens to British political style in the post-Thatcher era?

Julie Burchill: Iron Lady, we salute you

Lynn Barber; Polly Peck; Aids in the 1990s

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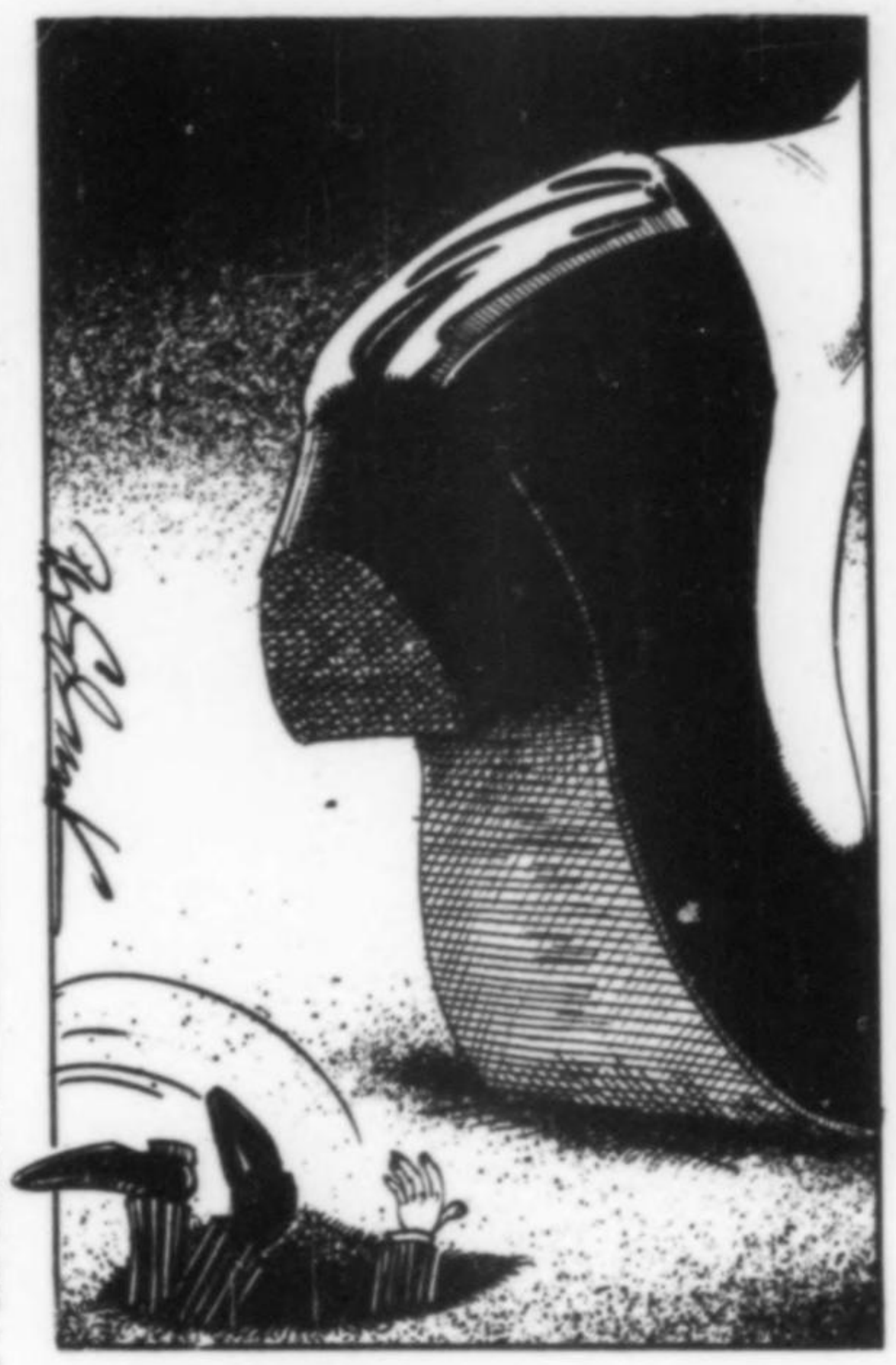
Peter Schrank

8 THE PRESIDENT HAS LANDED

Kinnock's leadership roadshow, Maggie's monarchical premiership, Heseltine's flair for the crowd … R W Johnson on the new presidentialism; plus **Follow my leader**—Thatcherism was as much about persona as politics. John Gaffney on the British cult of personality

12 Righter leader

Purveyor of opinion, analysis and bluster: the *Economist*. Kirsty Milne examines the appeal of the boardroom bible

13 Polly peek

As the Cyprus-based Polly Peck empire collapses, western policy on the island's conflict is shifting. Christopher Price reports

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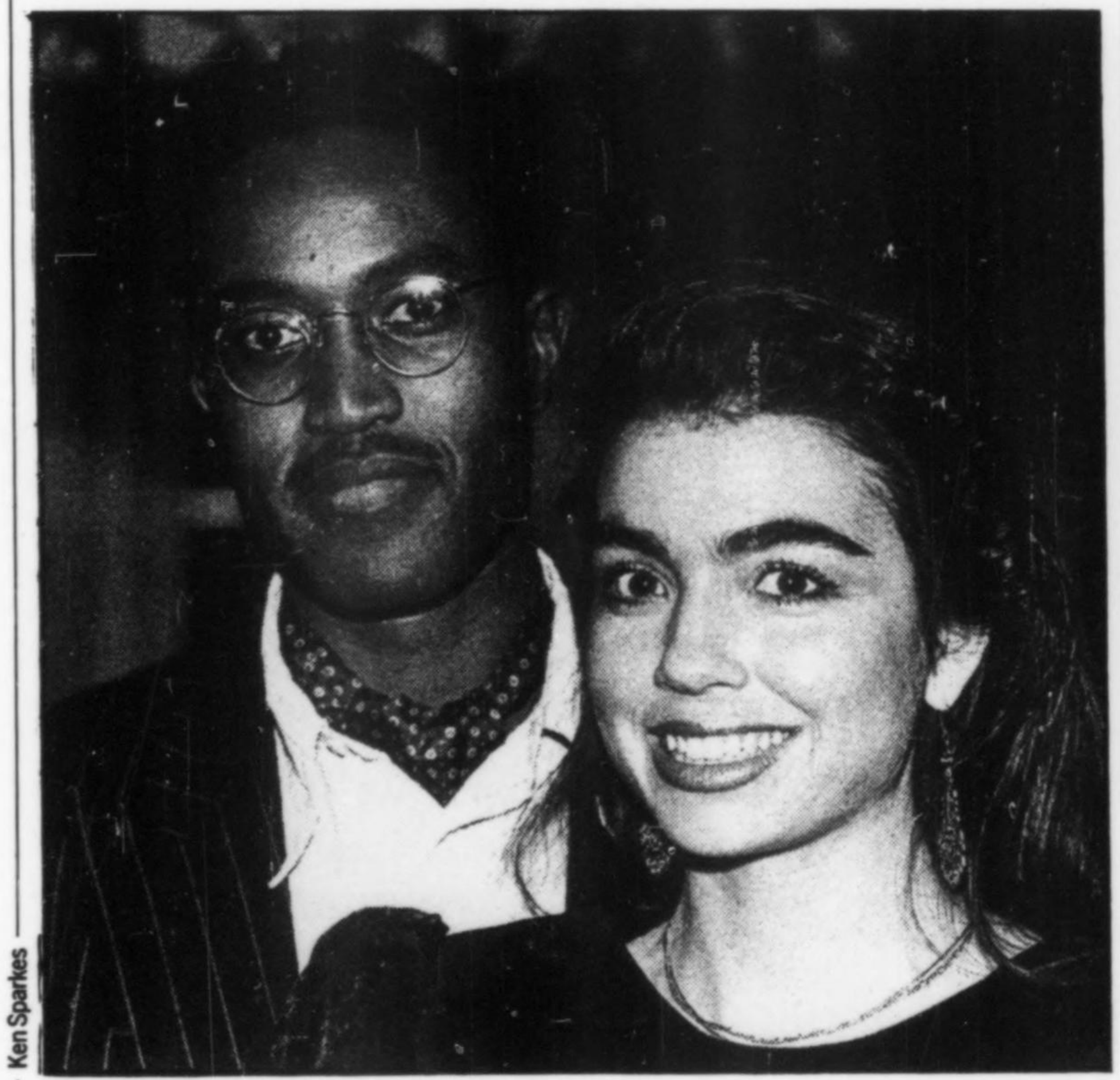
One self-made outsider, Julie Burchill, pays tribute to another. Farewell to Maggie—monster, mother, megawoman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FRINGE BENEFITS

Dane lore

Colin Ward

Remember Christiania? In 1971 we all learned how, as the army moved out of its 50-acre barracks site in Copenhagen, the squatters moved in to set up an alternative community. Since then, every few years, our press reports that the police have moved in to re-establish law and order.

"Don't believe a word of it," Kai Lemberg urged me. "Christiania is alive and well, after 19 years." He is director of planning for Greater Copenhagen and, like his great predecessor Steen Eiler Rasmussen, has braved fierce opposition in support of the unofficial city. In 1976, Rasmussen, as grand old man, wrote *Omkring Christiania*, a book that explained to fellow citizens how important it was for a rich complacent city to embrace, at its very heart, a community of 900 people whose values were different.

Lemberg has followed the same line, defending it not only against the city councillors, but at the Council of Europe, the OECD, and even at a congress of American mayors. Cross-examined by them, he declared: "I would recommend that you should have a Christiania in Washington, and every other city." His origins are not in architecture or geography: he is an economist. But his urban ideology derives, as he says, from the polarisation of security and freedom, suggested by the psychologist Abraham Maslow. Security is automatically the priority of planners, administrators, property developers and speculators. Freedom is our under-represented personal desire: the informal, unmanageable, spontaneous life we actually cherish, from street-markets to jazz nights in the pub.

It was music to my ears when Lemberg declared: "Every city desperately needs its anarchists." He has a dozen other paradoxes to offer. One is that the military are the best conservationists, just because they are sacred cows, beyond the free-market in land, and consequently have no interest in environmental destruction. Another is that the bigger and more comprehensive the plan, the less likely it is to be translated into reality. Of proposals for his own city, he explained that: "Luckily enough, they were so big that they never got done." Wealthier Stockholm had, unfortunately, to take on the whole plan.

We were sitting around a canteen table when Lemberg declared that, far from complicating everything with computerised surveys, it was the duty of planners to simplify and make things comprehensible, not only to politicians, but to the citizens themselves.

In the dark days of Nazi occupation, Rasmussen and his colleagues had planned for postwar Copenhagen. It was natural to embark on uneconomic land-drainage schemes, just to prove to the Germans that no one could be spared for their war effort. It was also natural to evolve the famous *Finger Plan*, to explain how the city should expand along five fingers of development, served by electric trains, between wedges of forests and fields.

"But suppose," asks a planner, "that the natural pattern of growth demanded six fingers instead of five?" Lemberg replied, "In that case we should just have to ignore the sixth finger. It is more important that citizens should have a simple analogy, from the heart or from the hand, and consequently support an obviously sensible planning policy, than that they should be buried in incomprehensible detail."

Underneath all this is a very serious challenge to our accepted ideas about the place of planners or developers in determining the future of the city. Kai Lemberg is probably a lone voice back home, just as he would be in any British assembly of planners. But what a delight it was to meet a planner who recognises that the city is only valuable because its inhabitants have made it so, and that, consequently, the city *belongs* to its citizens.

---

significantly over recent years and, by 1987, more than 10 million people in Britain... were living in poverty." This is patently and demonstrably untrue.

It clearly *does* matter how one measures "poverty" to be able to make those assertions. There is no evidence to suggest, for example, that the number of people on, or below, an income of, say, 80 per cent of the 1979 real level of supplementary benefit, has increased "significantly" or, indeed, at all since that date. And, of course, only by taking particular measures of "poverty" can Ruth Lister and the CPAG conclude that there were "more than 10 million people" living in poverty in 1987.

As to the causes of poverty, Lister points to what she describes as a "cascade up" from the poor to the rich (rather than a trickle down in the reverse direction) in recent years. She presents no evidence for this, other than the (presumed) fact that the rich got richer in the period 1979 to 1987, while the "poorest" received no (real-term) increase at all.

It is clearly absurd to suggest that, merely because one group of income earners receives more, it therefore follows that other income groups would have received less. If Lister wishes to be taken seriously on this point, she needs to come up with something far more substantial than this transparent argument.

Paul Ashton
Myrtle Street
Liverpool

THIS ENGLAND

£5 book tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please)

● The only thing to sour the day's events [RAF Finningley Air Show] was a number of bomb scares, which involved clearing crowds from the areas surrounding suspect packages. Police dealt with them efficiently, and controlled explosions allowed crowds to continue enjoying the show.—*Doncaster Free Press* (John Hughes and Stella McGuire)

● Sir Ralph Halpern has left the Burton Group with a pension of £456,000 a year for life and a £2 million golden handshake.

One friend said: "The Fiona Wright affair on its own would not have damaged Ralph. No one thought any less of him, it blew the possibility of a peerage out of the water, that was all. But in conjunction with controversy over his salary, his image was affected. It didn't help that he was not public school."—*Times* (Derek Morgan)

● Foremost among those [Denis Thatcher] feels have let him down is Sir Neil Macfarlane, who seconded Heseltine's nomination and is one of his chief campaign managers. Thatcher and Macfarlane have been friends for years.

Thatcher has angrily been telling friends: "You can't play golf with a man one day and savage his wife the next."—*Times* (George Moor)

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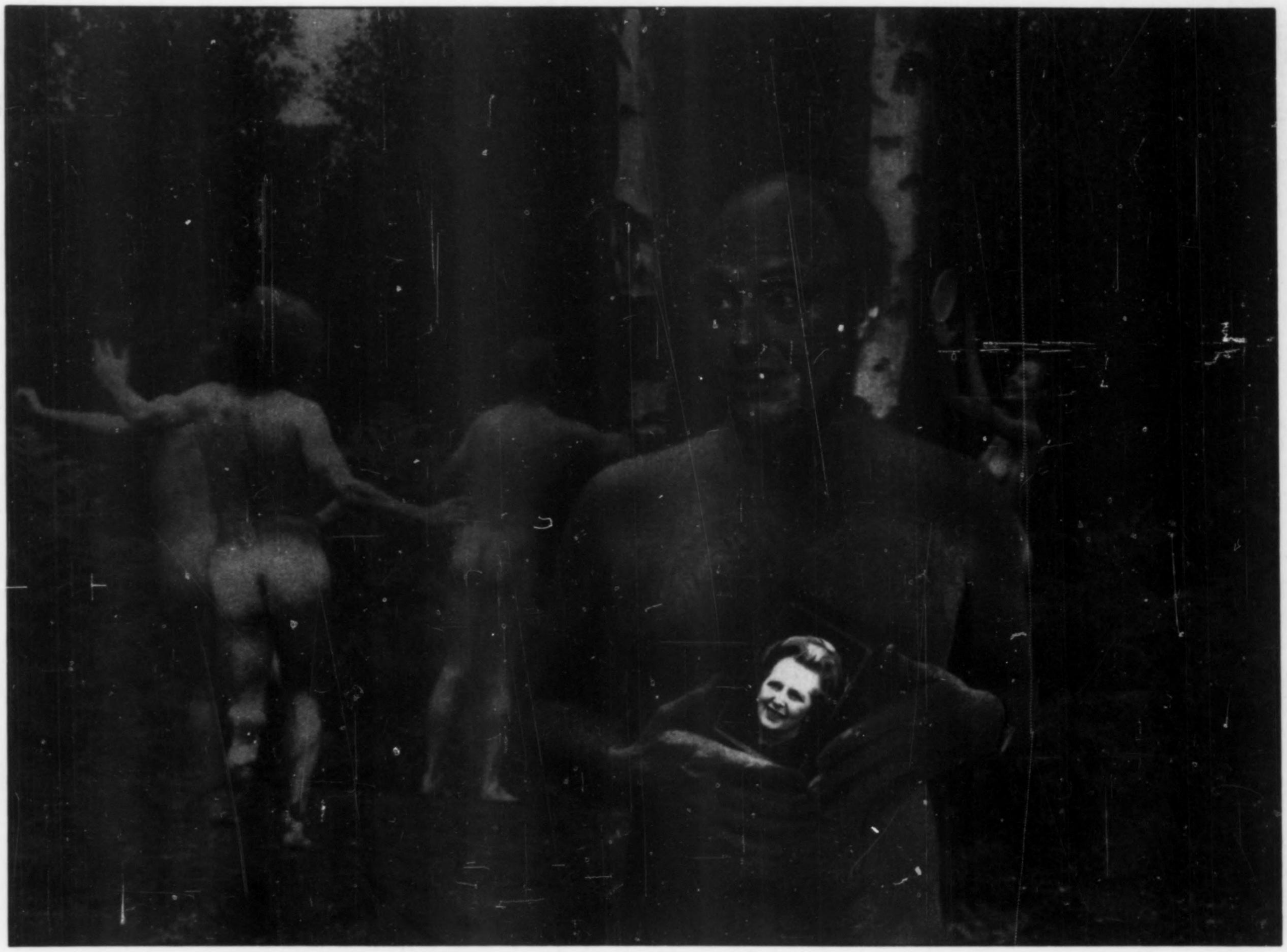

Run for your wife

Is Labour caught with its trousers down?
R W Johnson on the threadbare people's party

Why the Tories backed the wrong horse
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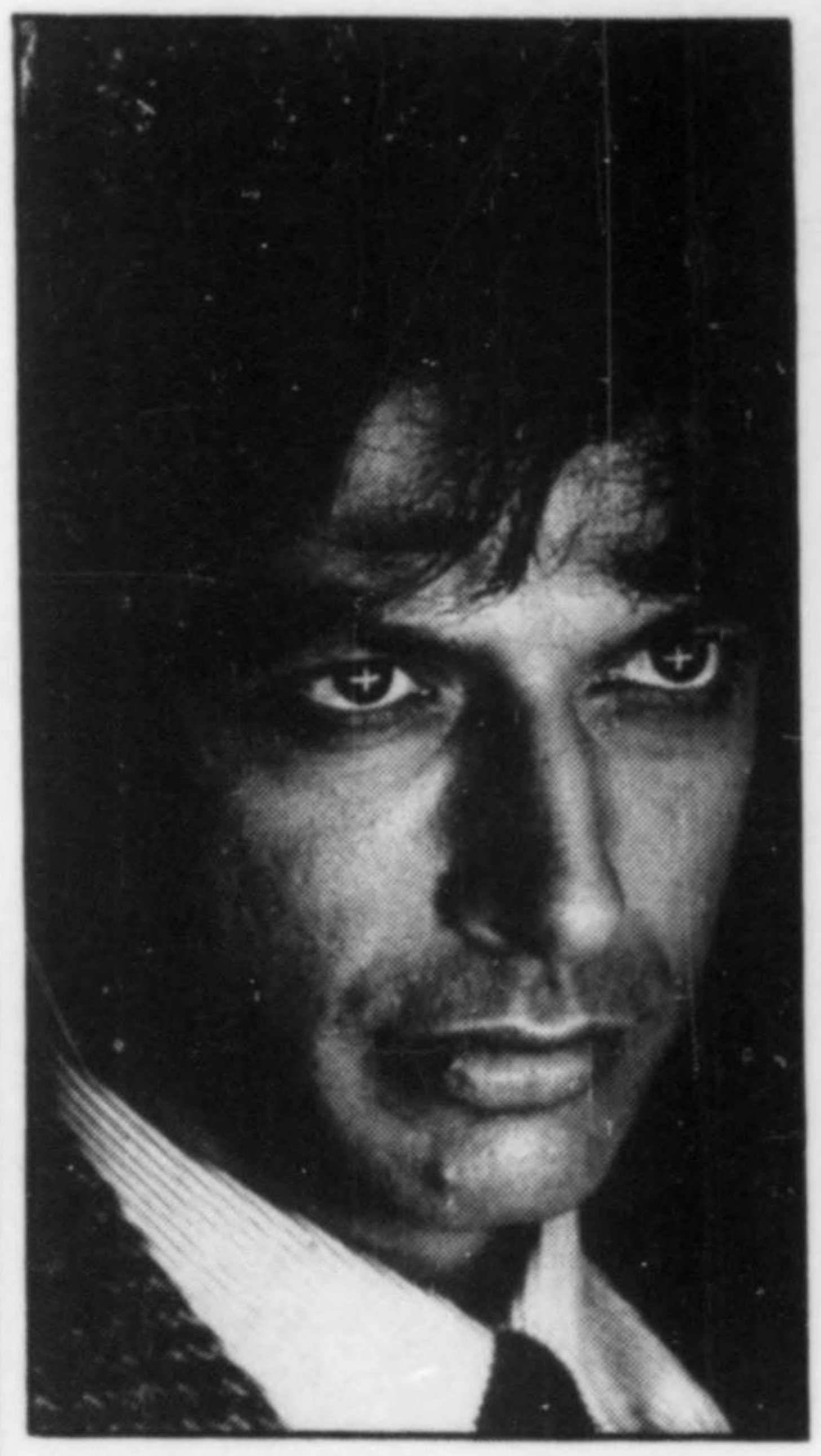

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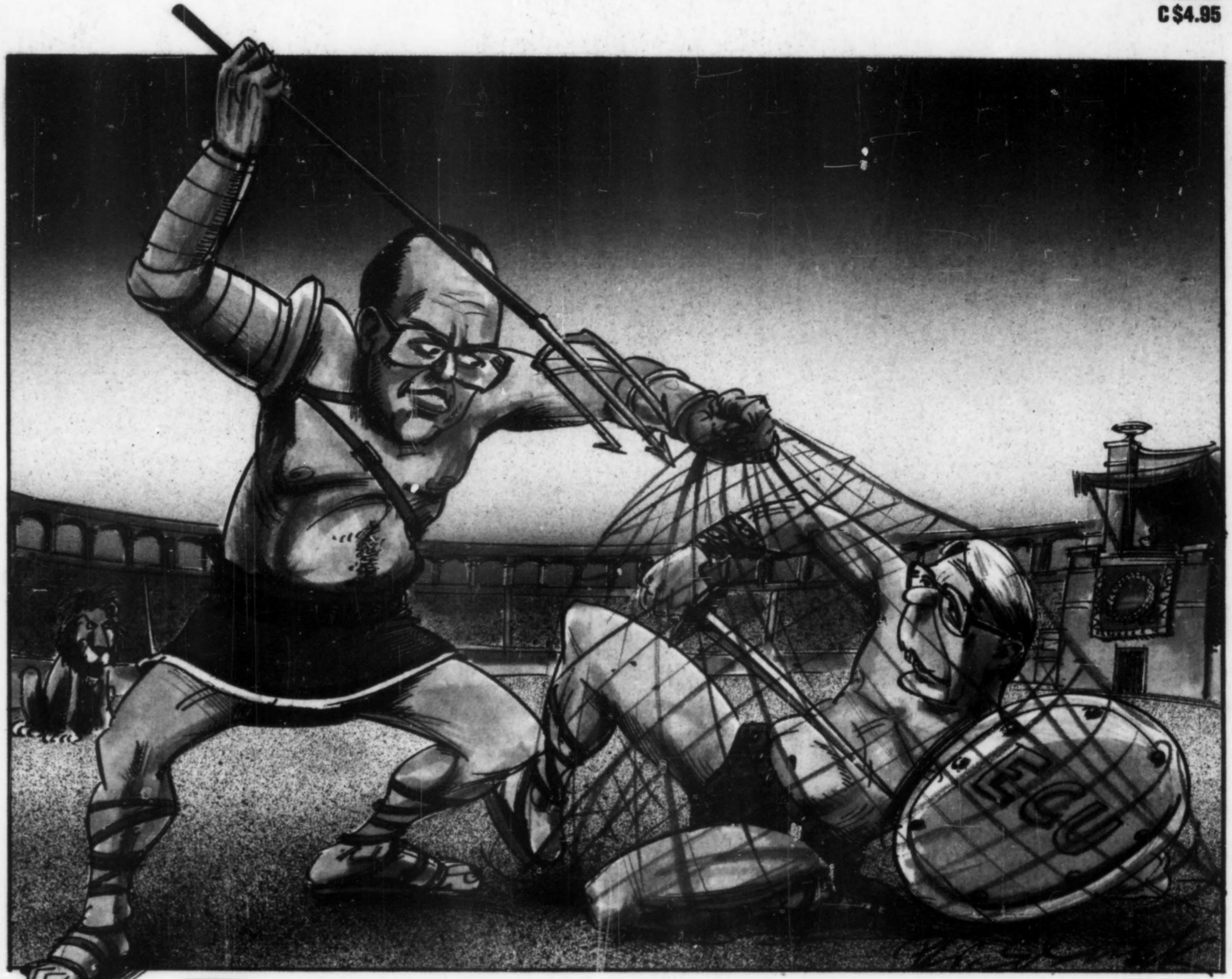

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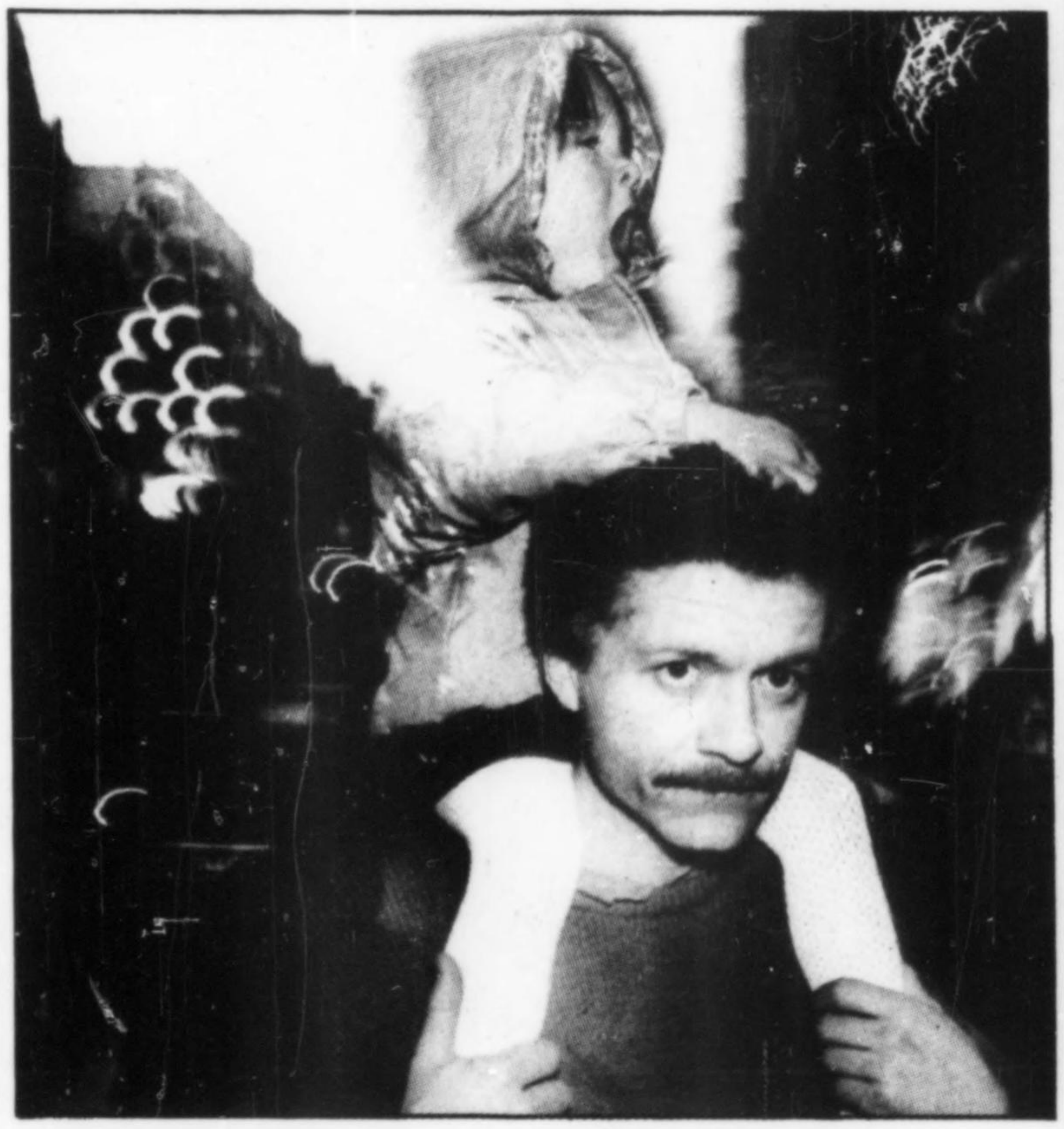

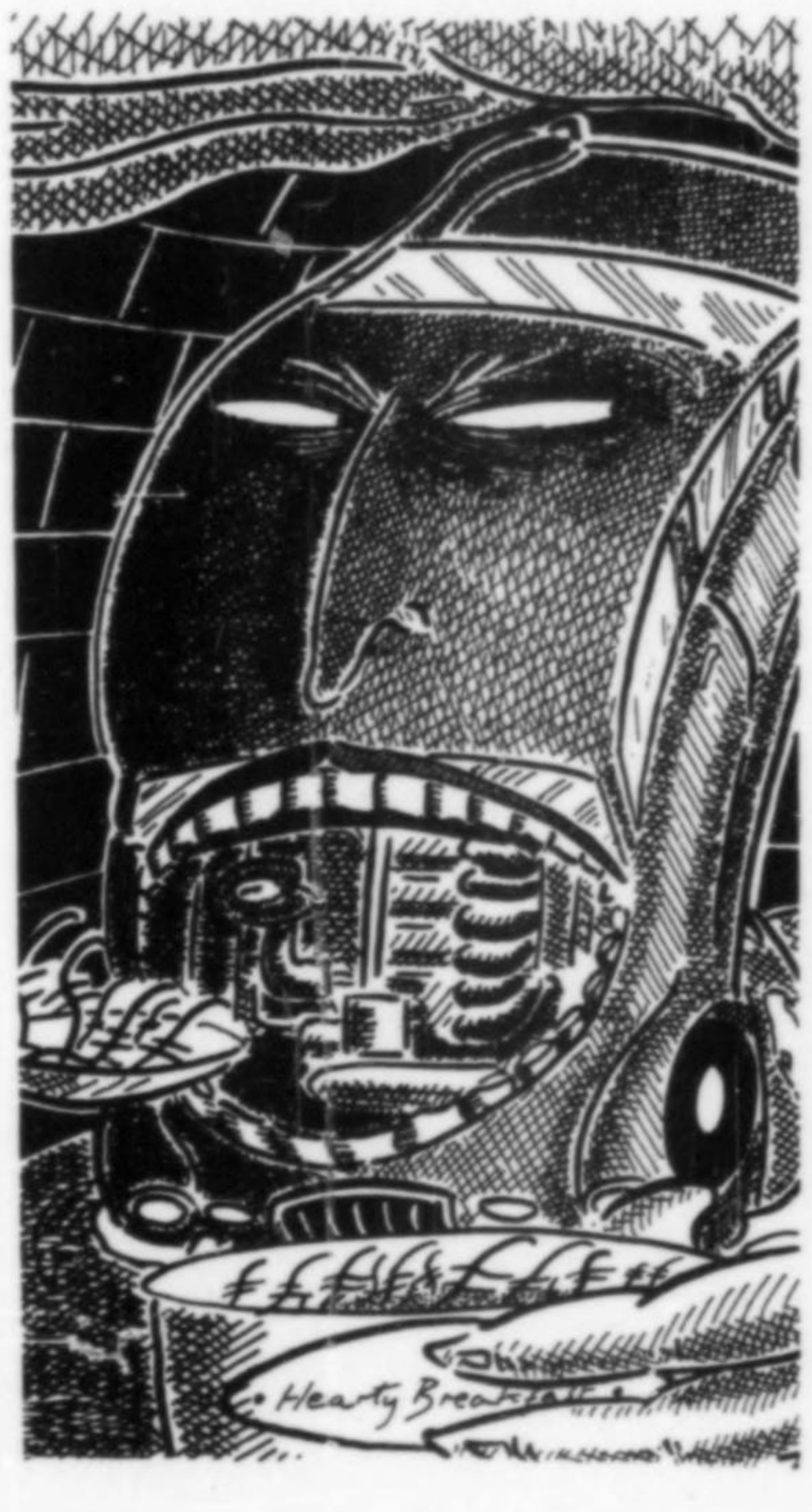

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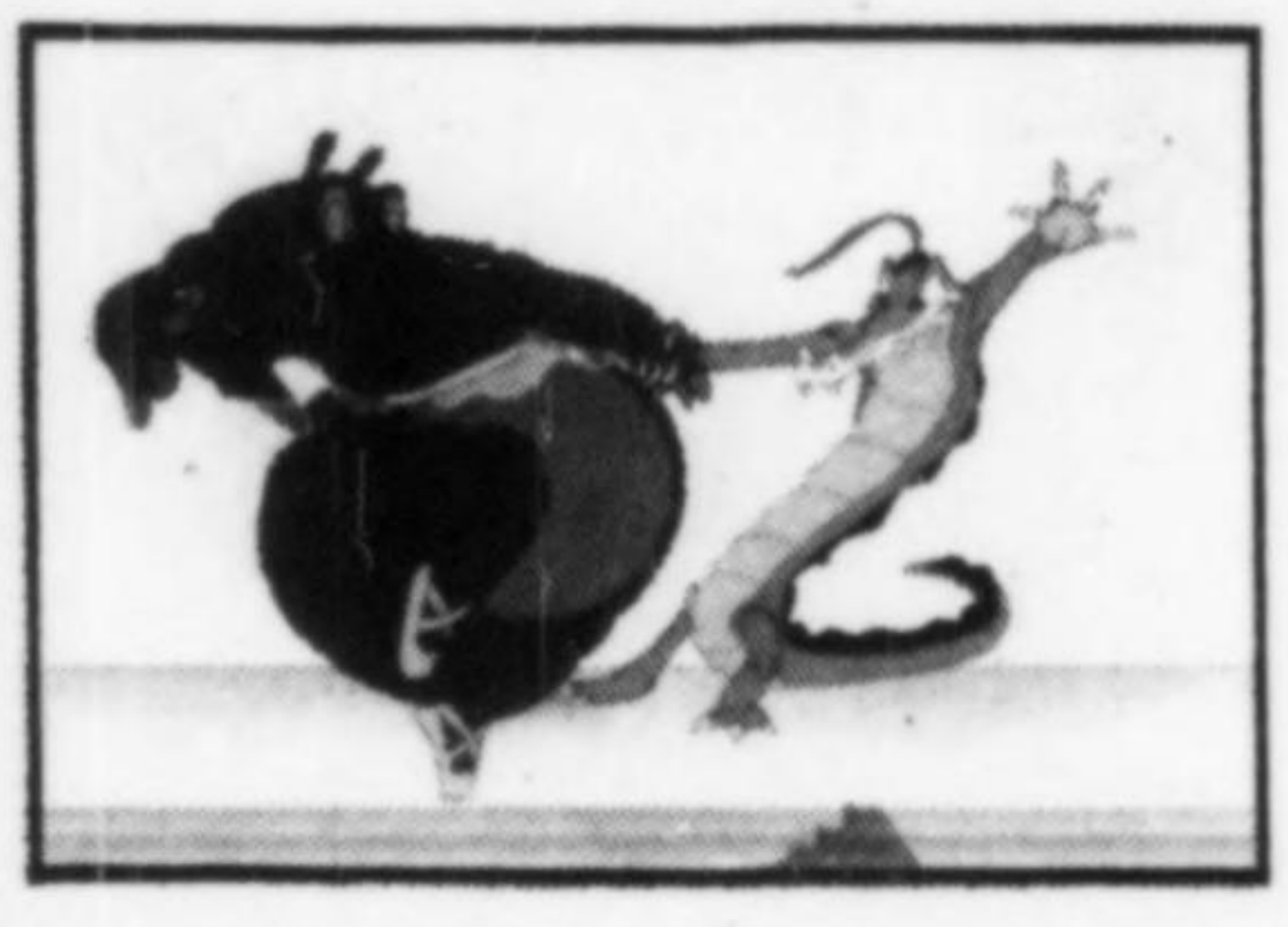

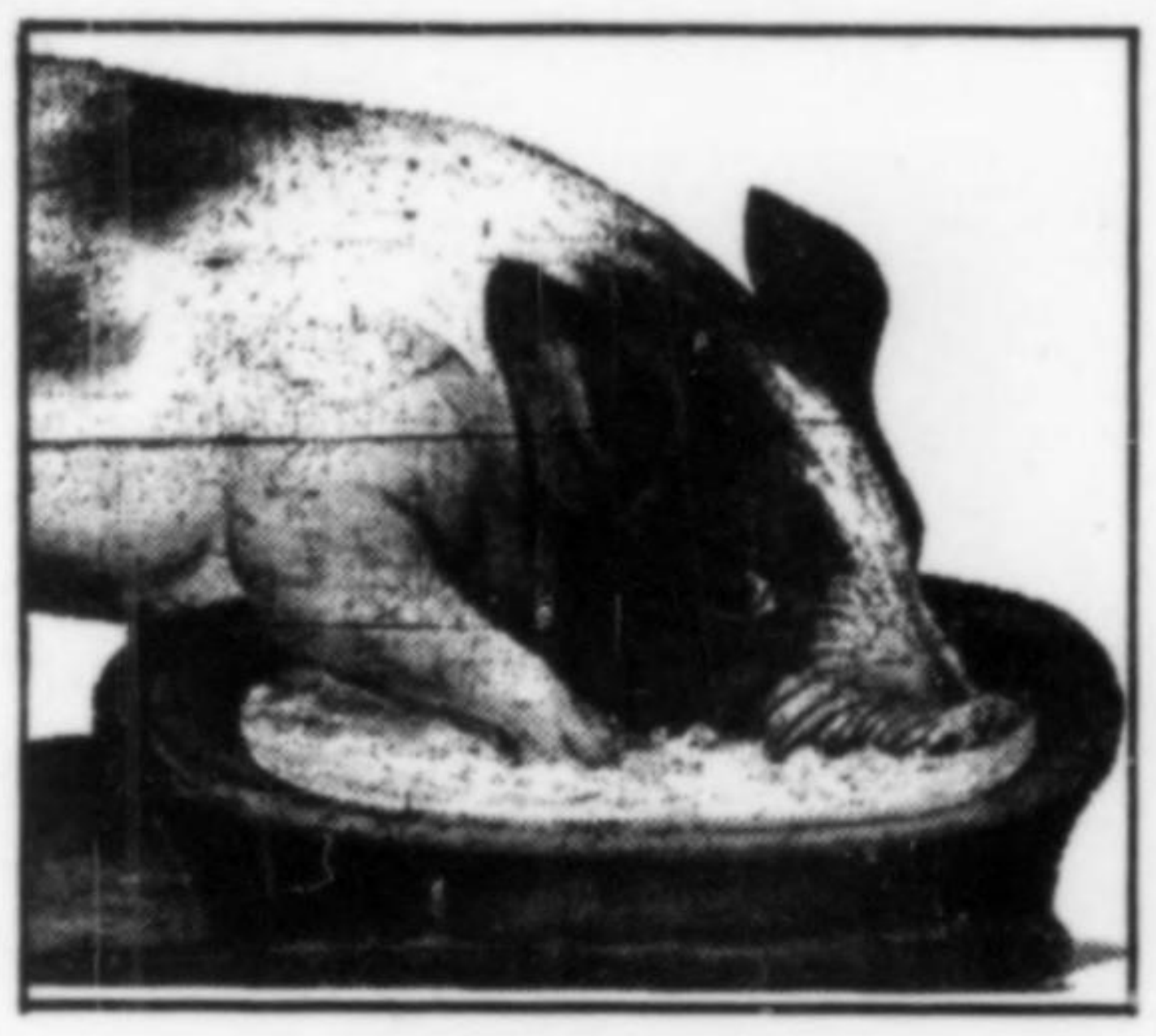

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FRINGE BENEFITS

Morris message

Colin Ward

Is there anything that remains to be said in praise of William Morris? The most fascinating thing about Paul Thompson's Kelmscott Lecture last month was the way he brought his experience as a pioneer of oral history to support Morris's claim that the rigidities of the factory system destroyed personal relations and independent initiative.

In the 1960s, Thompson conducted life-history interviews with 440 people born between 1870 and 1906, and reported in *The Edwardians* the finding that there was one community in Britain where child-rearing was more gentle, generous and civilised than in the ordinary British family of any class. This was among the crofter-fisherfolk of Shetland.

Intrigued by this, he was able, years later, to write a comparative study, *Living the Fishing*. Who would have guessed, 50 years ago, he asked, that the modern capitalist trawler fleets of ports such as Fleetwood, Hull and Aberdeen would by now be dead, while "backward" fishing communities would be flourishing? How is it that the prosperous crew from a remote island who "by the normal logic of 'progress' ought to have been driven out of business decades ago, could afford to lay up their half-million-pound ship for a week in order to take in the hay-harvest on their crofts?"

The answer, he was convinced, lies in the beliefs, values and attitudes of communities that retain "traditional" attitudes, such as work organisation around the family boat, rather than wage labour for a boss. "It is not," said Thompson, "the egalitarianism of the wider society which has stifled creativity and forced innovators into social isolation, but its demand for the social conformity and quiescence necessary to maintain inequality. The importance of the fishing communities is that they show the viability of an alternative way: for it is only such socially isolated groups which have been able to sustain up to the present the truer form of egalitarianism which fosters real social independence and individuality."

Ponder this thought, if you have been tempted to dismiss Morris as a sentimental medievalist. But Paul Thompson's work has brought the argument closer to home. He is involved in a comparative study of car workers in Britain and Italy and, more specifically, in Coventry and Turin.

At one time, the gang system of working in Coventry factories created what Thompson calls "a type of egalitarian co-operation that at least some workers believed to be the dawn of a new social world". It was killed off, first by the bosses proudly reasserting "management's right to manage", and then by the industry's collapse.

In Turin, too, vast numbers of jobs were lost, but with different results. Communist shop stewards, earmarked as the first to be sacked in 60,000 jobs lost at Fiat, set up their own workshops on the fringe of the city. Vittorio Rieser talked eloquently to me about those factors in working life that nurture resourcefulness and adaptability. He has seen that the wasted creativity in assembly-line production can find an outlet when people are working for themselves.

Another historian told me that, in Coventry, a third generation of workers had been "moulded in resistance to industrial capitalism", whereas, in Turin, the artisans and peasants who moved north were not "crushed by factory capitalism". It was easy for them to shift into self-employment, or to work for friends in high-tech workshops, or to pick up a living from close-to-the-market horticulture.

This became even more obvious to me when the people I wanted to talk to in a workshop at Trebbo di Reno outside Bologna turned out to have taken time off to gather the maize harvest. There in Reggio-nell'Emilia, I was already in the world of Morris's *News from Nowhere*.

Fan snub

In the week your report on the problems at Tottenham ("Tottering Hotspur", 23 November) appeared, the club announced mid-season price increases. The reason given is "escalating match-day costs".

You might also have said that after a kit deal with Umbro, Tottenham's match-day programme had glossy pull-outs for Hummel sports goods. A closing-down sale would have been more appropriate.

Such moves show Spurs' debt is matched only by the contempt the club has for the supporters.

Annelise Jespersen,
Tottenham Independent Supporters' Association

THIS ENGLAND

£5 book tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please)

● Last September PC Michael Batey stopped a driver on the M25 who seemed to be driving too slowly. The driver asked him if he was near Durham.

PC Bailey replied no, Durham was about 300 miles away. The driver was visibly shaken. It appeared that he had left his home, near Rochester, Kent, 10 hours earlier to drive to Durham, and had been driving round and round the M25 ever since.—*Daily Telegraph* (George Moor)

● Convict Gary Cooper was on the run yesterday—after prison staff asked him to transfer jails on his own.

Cooper left Ford open prison in Sussex with a rail ticket, headed for a jail at Sheerness, Kent.

But he never arrived.—*Daily Mirror* (George Moor)

● And what is the legal position for someone who discovers he has bought a house with a spectral sitting tenant? It depends on the ghost, according to an article due to appear in the January *Country Homes and Interiors*.

If the spirit is not "of the tiresomely mournful sort that wails, clanks chains or frightens the dogs", it should be good news. Such spooks "can add value and charm to a house".—*Times* (George Moor)

● CAPTAIN'S DISCO. Notice to all players, this is a compulsory event and takes place on Saturday 22 December. Those not attending will face stiff penalties. Females are being arranged and there will be a very pleasant happy hour.—Exeter Rugby Club match programme (A Kirkby)

● Mr Galbraith added: "I'll tell you how indicative it is of the feeling here; someone got a cab after the meeting and asked the driver what he thought of it. The driver said, 'Over my dead body would we have a black.' There. You can't get much more democratic than that."
—*Evening Standard* (R Rubin)

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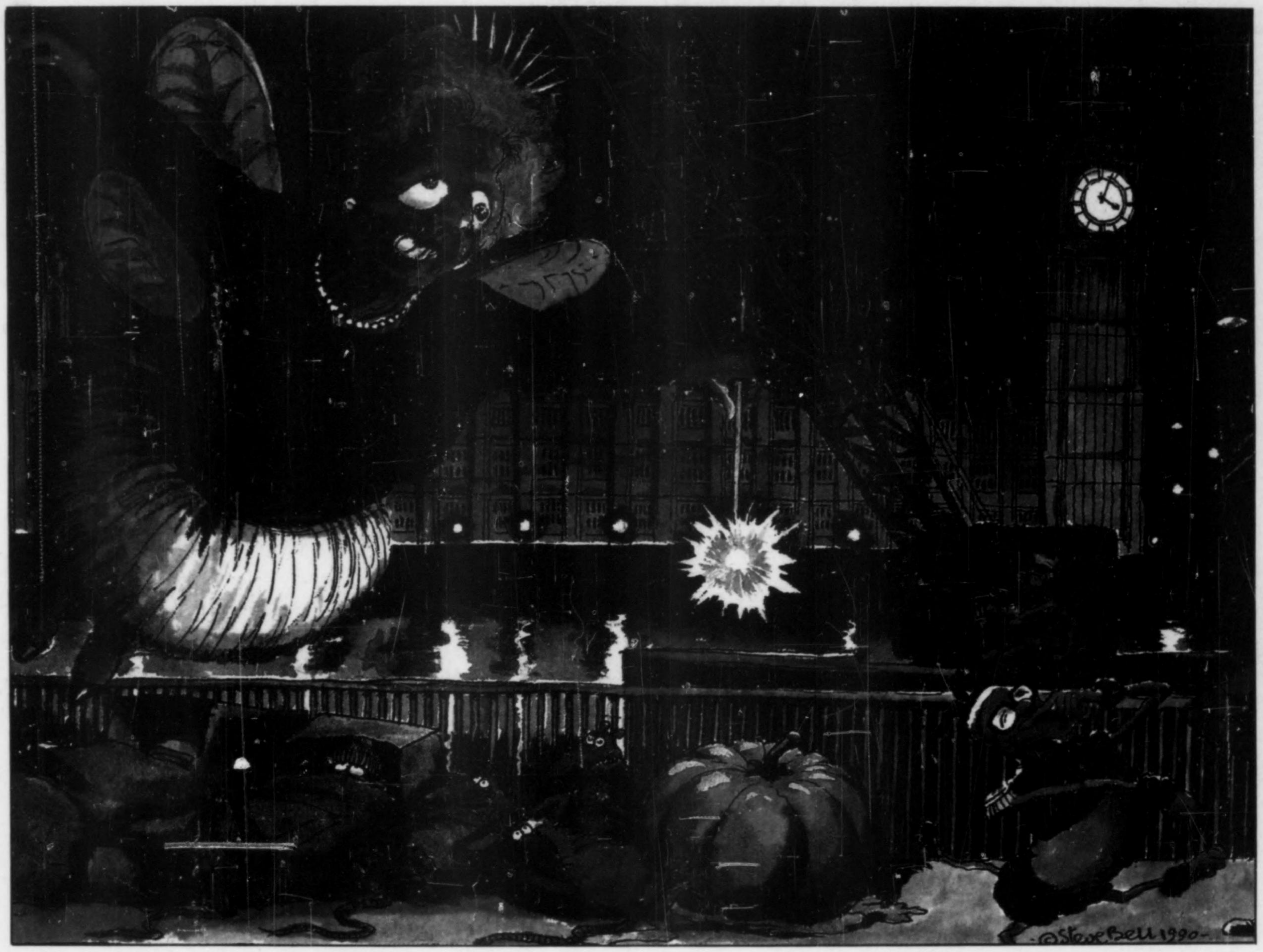

A classless panto

Christmas in Dulwich by Steve Bell and Roger Woddis

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* * *

A message to our readers: we hope you enjoy the Christmas double issue. The next NSS *issue will be out on 11 January 1991.*

* * *

EMOCRATICODELL

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I'm smoking
Three Nuns
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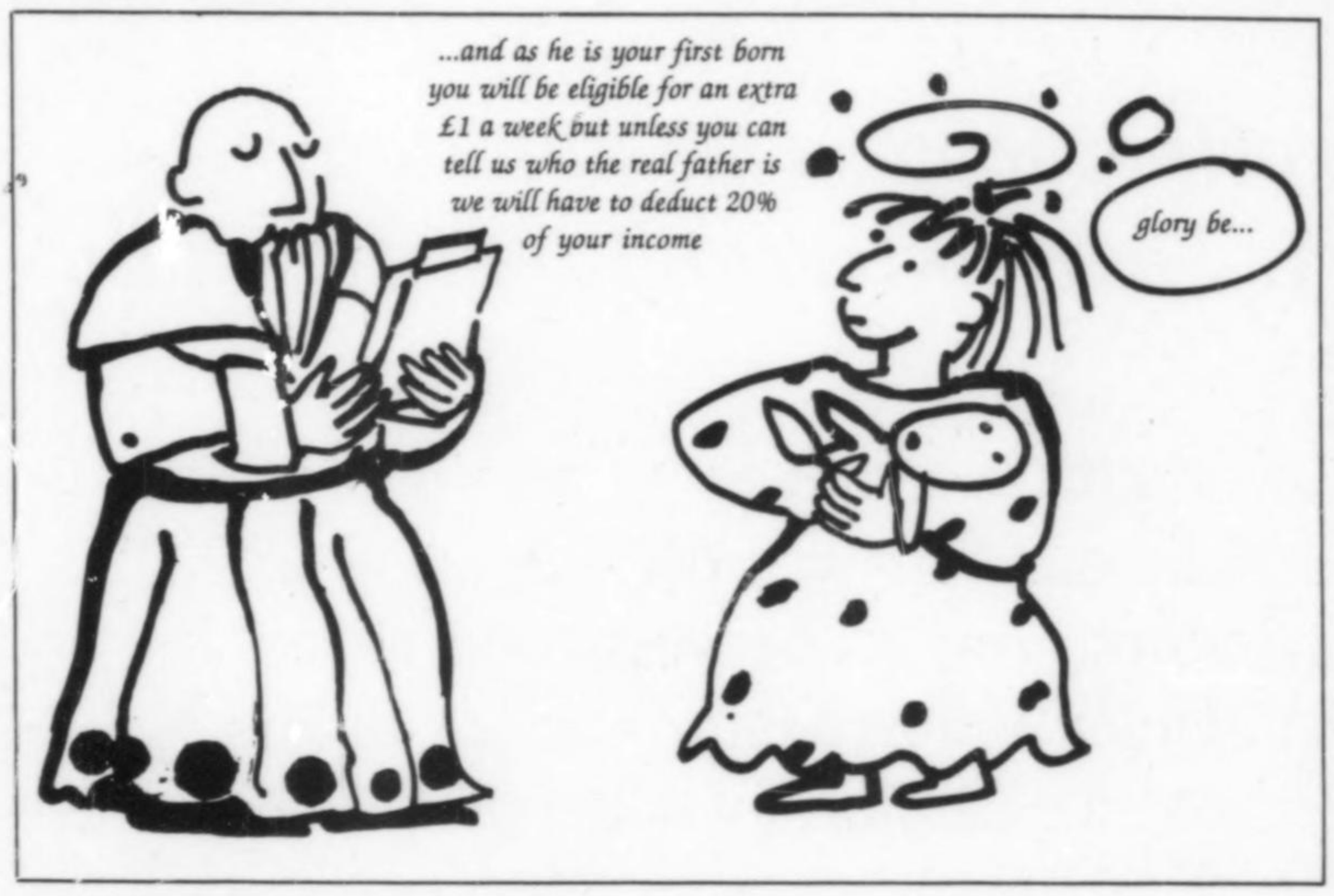

...and as he is your first born you will be eligible for an extra £1 a week but unless you can tell us who the real father is we will have to deduct 20% of your income
glory be...

Jessica Jenkins

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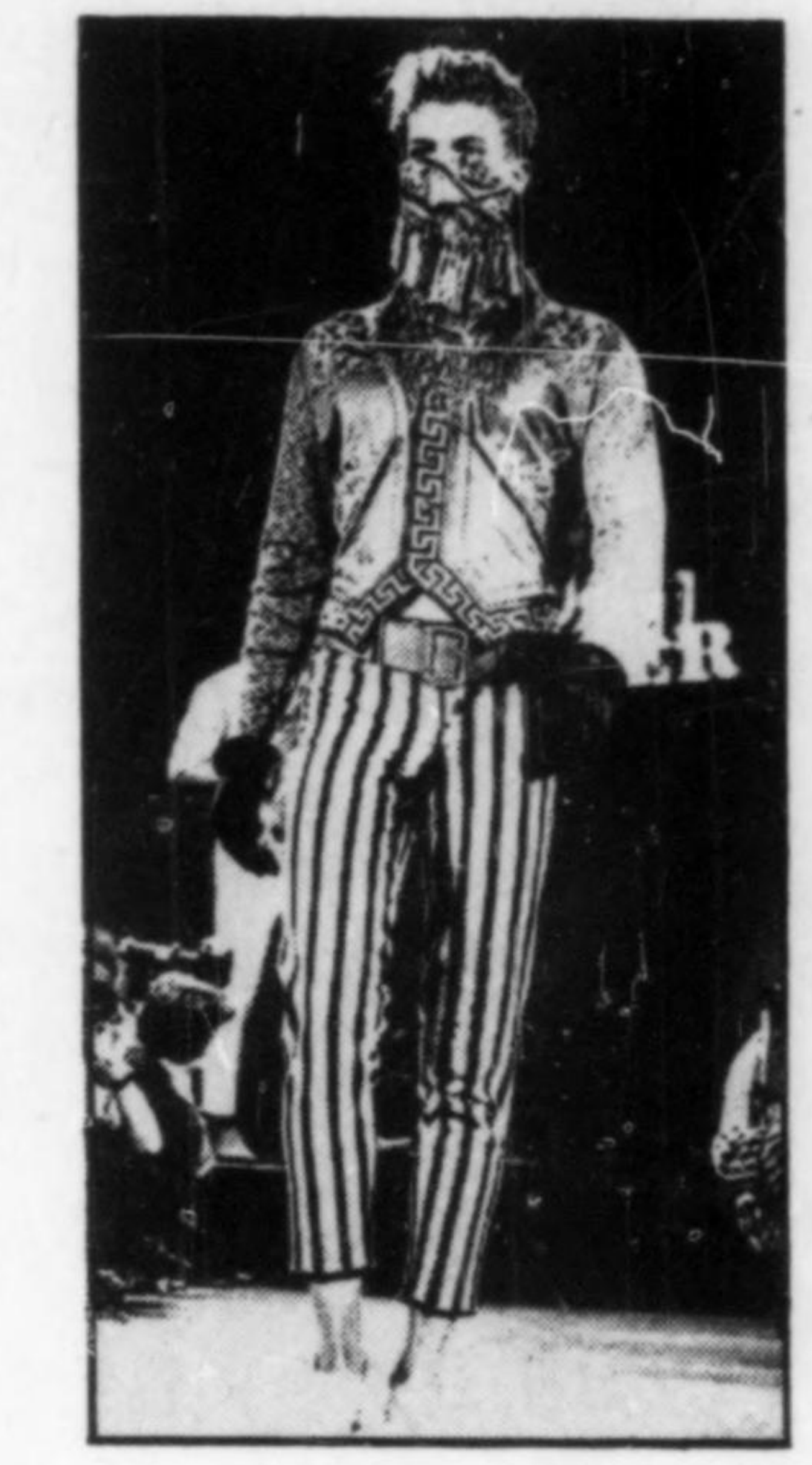

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FRINGE BENEFITS

Bad tidings

Colin Ward

In the last century, in order to protect citizens from open sewers, polluted water, overcrowding, damp, adulterated food, and having nowhere to wash, medical officers of health battled against the notion that it was a sin to interfere with nature and market forces. They were fighting epidemics of typhus, cholera, diphtheria and tuberculosis.

So we had Public Health Acts and the sanitary inspector, replaced in time by Housing Acts and the environmental health officer. Their powers were used devastatingly in the 1950s and 1960s to pull down acres of Coronation Streets and decant the residents into new council blocks. But, by the 1970s, large-scale clearance was abandoned, as it was socially destructive, politically unacceptable and cost too much.

New Housing Acts promoted programmes of aid for improvement of pre-1919 houses. This was cheaper and more popular. But that, too, is now history. Clearance is back, as I learn from a new and shocking report by Frances Heywood and Mohammed Rashid Naz, *Clearance: the view from the street* (Community Forum, Birmingham, £10.95).

This is a study accumulated from detailed interviews with residents, councillors and council officers. It finds that: "The slum clearance legislation we have was designed to rescue poor tenants from bad landlords but is now being used to force owner-occupiers out of homes in which they are perfectly or reasonably content, telling them that they are 'unfit for human habitation'."

Worse: "Besides the threat of clearance for a particular development, residents of Britain's old industrial cities face a new hazard, and that is clearance for *potential* development, to allow local authorities to bid for multinational investment in their area...Thus we are presented with the unwholesome spectacle of (mainly Labour-controlled) local authorities rushing to clear homes... so as to have a package of clear sites to offer any large company that expresses a passing interest."

The authors try not to put the blame on council officers. But they did find a general resentment of the private sector "pervading the housing department from the committee chairs downwards". Above all, there remain "old style environmental health officers who have never really shed the belief that the only way to deal with old housing is to knock it all down, and the sooner the better".

The report challenges the assumption that clearance is cheaper than rehabilitation. That belief results from the accident that different funds come from different public budgets, and from central government's myopia.

As to the health aspect, the authors cite the 1987 annual report by the department of community medicine of the Central Birmingham Health Authority. It contrasts two poor areas with the same age distribution: Sparkhill, an area of inner-city terraced housing, with only 7 per cent council properties, and Netchells, where 87 per cent of the housing is postwar, council-owned, and only 4 per cent private. Almost all Netchells housing is of the kind built for the purpose of improving people's health by moving them out of slums.

The health authority reported that Netchells has more than twice as many hospital admissions for self-injury. It has the city's worst record at nearly every age, ranging from accidental poisoning in children to deliberate suicide attempts in adults.

The authors comment that "there is enough evidence here that, if environmental health officers were less prejudiced and more objective about ill health, they might stop worrying about perished brickwork and cracks in Sparkhill, and start taking action on the housing and environmental factors that perhaps cause so many people in Netchells to take their own lives."

and income distributions.

I did not, nor have I ever, argued that the number of people living at or below the social benefit (SB) levels has not increased in total since 1979; plainly it has. Instead, I mooted two conditions that challenged Ruth Lister's assertion that: "Whichever way you measure it, poverty has grown significantly over recent years..."

First, that one takes the real 1979 level of SB (ie, deflated by the relevant price index); and, second, that one takes a level 20 per cent lower than this as a poverty measure. On that basis, neither Lister, nor the Child Poverty Action Group, nor the Institute of Fiscal Studies, has produced any statistics to show an increase in poverty so defined.

The simple mistake that both Hatchett and Lister make in assuming you cannot give to the rich without taking from the poor is to ignore any growth in the size of the cake one is distributing.

Paul Ashton
Dept of Economics and Accounting
University of Liverpool

THIS ENGLAND

£5 book tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please)

● A *Star* reporter turned up in Dhahran last week clutching a large Samsonite suitcase containing mince pies, balloons, streamers, CDs and funny hats bearing the newspaper's name.

Initially, the Army was reluctant to get involved but was prevailed upon to do so after the editor, Brian Hitchen, telephoned Defence Secretary Tom King.

A reporter and photographer were whisked out to the edge of the desert, where bemused squaddies were ordered to eat mince pies while wearing the funny hats.—*The Observer* (George Moor)

● The Swallow Chase hotel at York is offering a green Christmas. For £330, guests can sleep for five nights in unheated rooms to conserve oil, eat vegetarian dinners, and be treated to a plastic Christmas tree.

Attempts by hotel staff to ban Brazil nuts, in support of the rainforest, are of little use. "They only grow wild so there is no threat," says FoE's tropical rainforest campaigner.—*Times* (Derek Morgan)

● Author and playwright John Mortimer has told the *Catholic Herald*: "I have come to the conclusion that I am a Christian. Except of course that I don't believe in God."

Asked how he could reconcile the two, Mortimer replied: "I'm part of a Christian civilisation... I write within a Christian ethic... but I can't take God."

Mortimer said the problem was partly theological, partly one of presentation. "The image I have of God is so unlikeable."—*Times* (George Moor)

NEW STATESMAN SOCIETY

11 January 1991
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‘During the war with Iran we lost 53,000 men to regain one small city, a place Americans have never heard of. Do you think Mr Bush can afford to lose 53,000 men to defend some hole in the Saudi desert?’

Desert dispatches: Marc Cooper in Baghdad and Amman

02
9 770954 236008

PLUS: Wynne Godley on the long-term decline of the British economy; RW Johnson on recession; Bernard Crick on RW Johnson; Mary Kaldor on the new cold war

U·M·I

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& SOCIETY

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James Glasse shops for souvenirs—tear gas and electric truncheons—in Beijing

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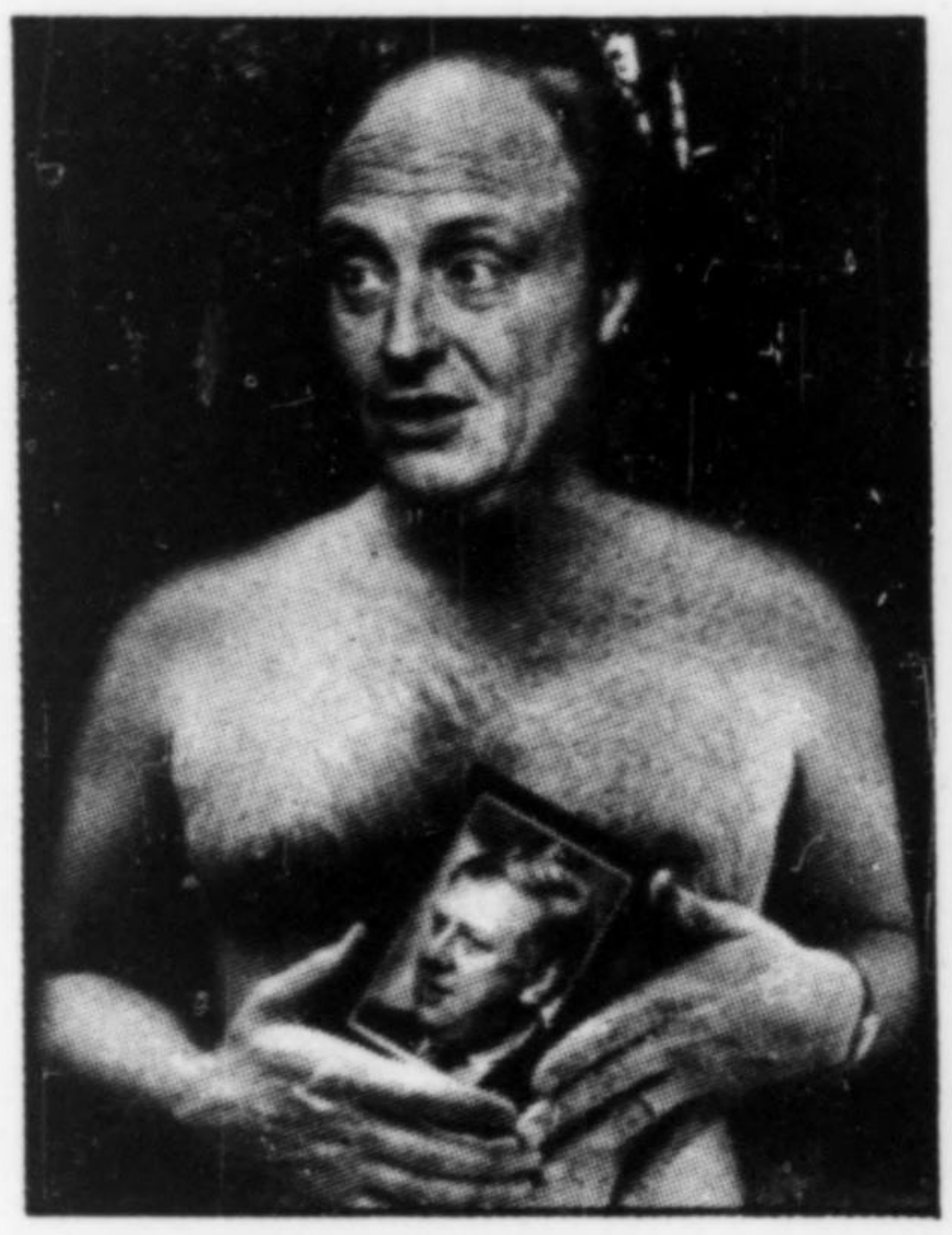
Was this picture (right) over the top? Bernard Crick on why Labour's leader should be taken seriously



18 An old limousine

Professor Wynne Godley begins a series of articles on the British economy, this week charting the havoc wreaked by Thatcher's inaugural slump and the disastrous Lawson boom

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The west's addiction to cold-war habits threatens to obscure the opportunities for peace in the Middle East, argues Mary Kaldor

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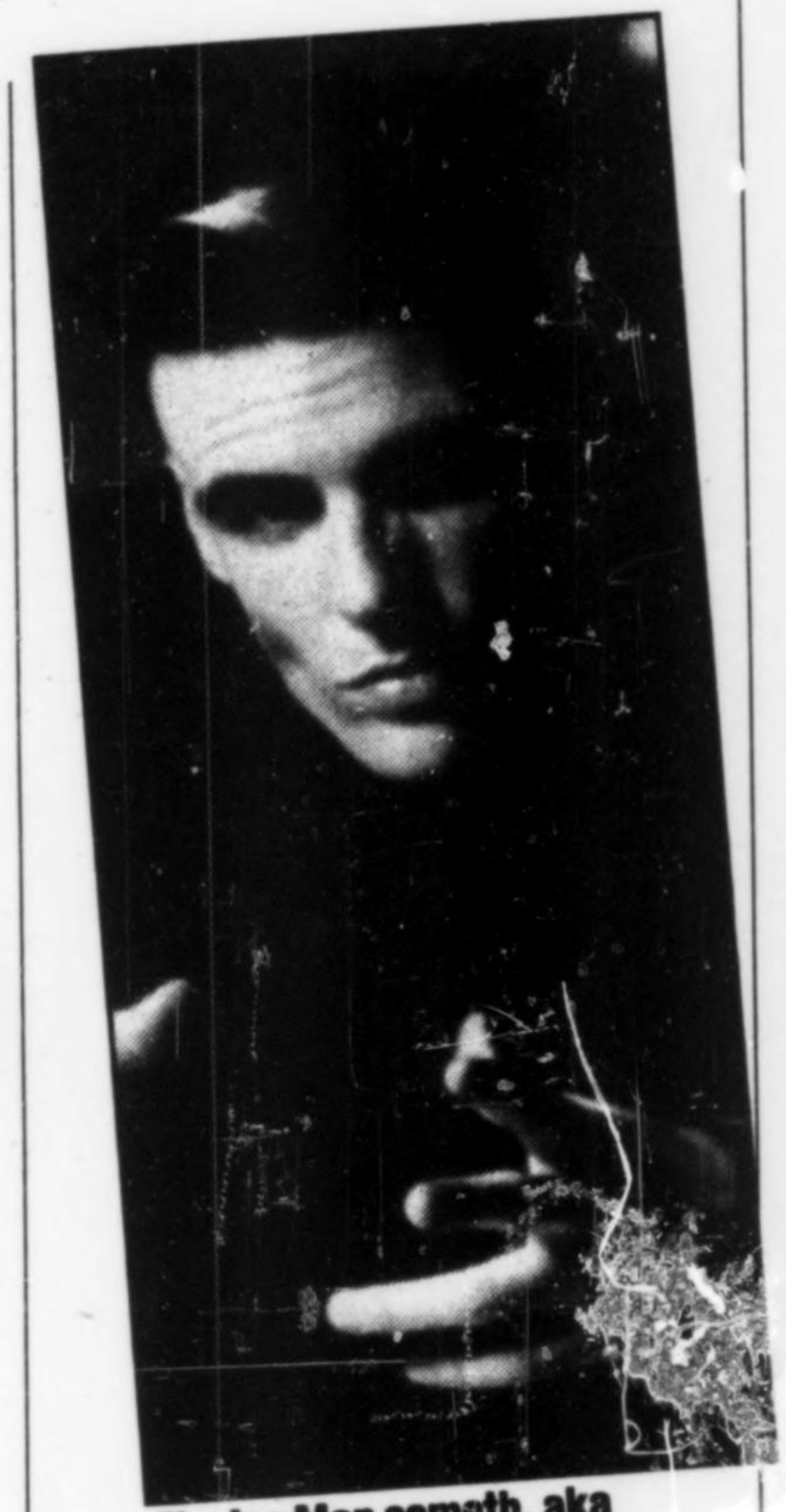
Marc Cooper visits Iraq's chief propagandist and finds him in belligerent mood; in the war of threats and brinkmanship, Bush has a fierce opponent



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FRINGE BENEFITS

Workers' playtime

Colin Ward

No place is sadder than a seaside town in winter. But we resolved to make the most of our trip to Felixstowe for the Annual General Meeting of the Suffolk Federation of the Workers' Educational Association. The mere mention of this body brings automatic sneers in the graduate classes about old ladies learning flower-arranging.

Those who know better have a slightly different view, and our tutor-organisers had set up a busy day to draw us in. The morning was spent at the Landguard Fort right next to the vast container port. Our volunteer guide presented it to us as part of our English Heritage (the government department that now owns it). But we amateur historians knew that it was a grotesque monument to the way the military élite got their way all through history, and treated their underlings as slaves. We learned how, in the seventeenth century, when the starving, ill-clad and unpaid foot soldiers mutinied, the commanding officer had lots drawn to decide which man should be hanged for the sins of all. The man chosen, Benjamin Damont, was sent under armed escort to Trimley, the nearest village, but the constable there "most contemptiously" returned the warrant and discharged the soldier, provoking outraged protests to the government from the commander.

One member is going to search the records to find out what happened to Ben. We learned how the governors of the fort looted the stores in the eighteenth century, and about the riotous life led by the officers; and we saw the squalor in which the soliders lived, incredibly, until 1954. Our history turned out to be very much like that of Russia or Latin America: the guns in the batteries were never actually fired, as the only time the east coast was invaded was by the Dutch (led by an English colonel) in 1667, and the intruders landed out of reach of the cannon.

However, the deterrent theory was used to justify an unbelievable new fortress in 1875 to protect us from the French Third Republic. Digesting this absurdity and our fish lunch, we converged on a church hall for the real business of the day: the annual Harry Clements Memorial Lecture.

For our tutor-organiser had achieved a minor coup in securing Andrei Pionkowsky, a supporter of the Democratic Russian Movement and visiting lecturer at Cambridge, who was able to discuss Soviet politics with us at much greater length that he was given on Channel 4 that evening. He confessed that events had moved so quickly since he came in September that he had to rely on the BBC World Service to keep him in touch with home.

His point of view was rather different from that of our local Sovietophiles, who have been inching back for years from old gospels. He reminded us that the most dangerous time for any regime was when it tried, too late, to reform itself. "Gorbachev," he said, "is the last tsar of the Soviet empire, as well as the last survivor of Brezhnev's Politburo. He has now reached the limit of his democratic potential." He went on to say that he shared the view that the ferment in eastern Europe had been set up by the KGB in an attempt to retain Communist Party control. But it had been too late to shut the gates.

Suffolk's WEA members, formidably well informed, got interesting answers. On the issue of the "destructive and separatist forces" that Gorbachev accused of "breaking up the USSR", Pionkowksy's reply was that, by now, the Soviet Union had 15 legitimate governments "and one illegitimate one—in the Kremlin". It was for the republics to decide "what functions to delegate to an all-union authority" in a genuine federation. Those who had previously absorbed Soviet history reflected that his programme was remarkably like the left opposition, brutally eliminated 70 years ago.

motoring costs per mile to compare with public transport, a telephone call to the AA would have sufficed—the figures are startling. A wimp at a wheel is a fool losing money fast if he travels alone.

P L & M C Lancaster
Shelley Close
Maldon

The father's ...

According to Christina Kent ("Daddy's out", 14 December), "Coming out was undoubtedly liberating, and right, for John. But his action left Elizabeth [his wife] and the children devastated." Given the latter consequence, in what sense can John's action be "right"? There doesn't seem to be even the ghost of a moral dilemma, since we are not told that anyone but John benefited from his decision.

Widening the debate: is the romantic ideal of personal authenticity and liberation—the implicit justification for John's behaviour—compatible with anything recognisable as moral responsibility?

Philip Jones
Maycross Avenue
Morden

... tale

So John looks on the day he "came out" with pride, does he? Yet, apparently, he hadn't the guts to tell his children, but left that job to his wife. However, his present set-up—living in the same house as his abandoned wife—is to him a source of self-satisfied amusement: "'Some days I feel there's not enough of me to go round,' he jokes." No joke for his wife!

Supposing John had had a secret affair with another *woman*, and had decided to tell all when his daughter was on the threshold of adulthood and his son of adolescence, would he be expected to feel a sense of pride and to indulge in feeble jokes? We wouldn't know, because he wouldn't have a page of the *NSS* written about him, would he?

John Marriott
Ravenlea Road
Folkestone

THIS ENGLAND

£5 book tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please)

● *A Very Close Conspiracy: Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf*, by Jane Dunn, yields the following—"ERRATA: Page xi Bell not Ball, p53 Vanessa not Virginia, p75 Virginia not Vanessa, p170 Vanessa not Virginia, p183 Virginia not Vanessa, p186 Virginia not Vanessa, p187 Virginia not Vanessa."—*Telegraph* (G Moor)

● Toilet cisterns could soon double as goldfish tanks. A London inventor has designed them in glass or transparent plastic. And they will be fitted with a special filter—to stop the fish being flushed down the loo.—*Daily Star* (G Moor)

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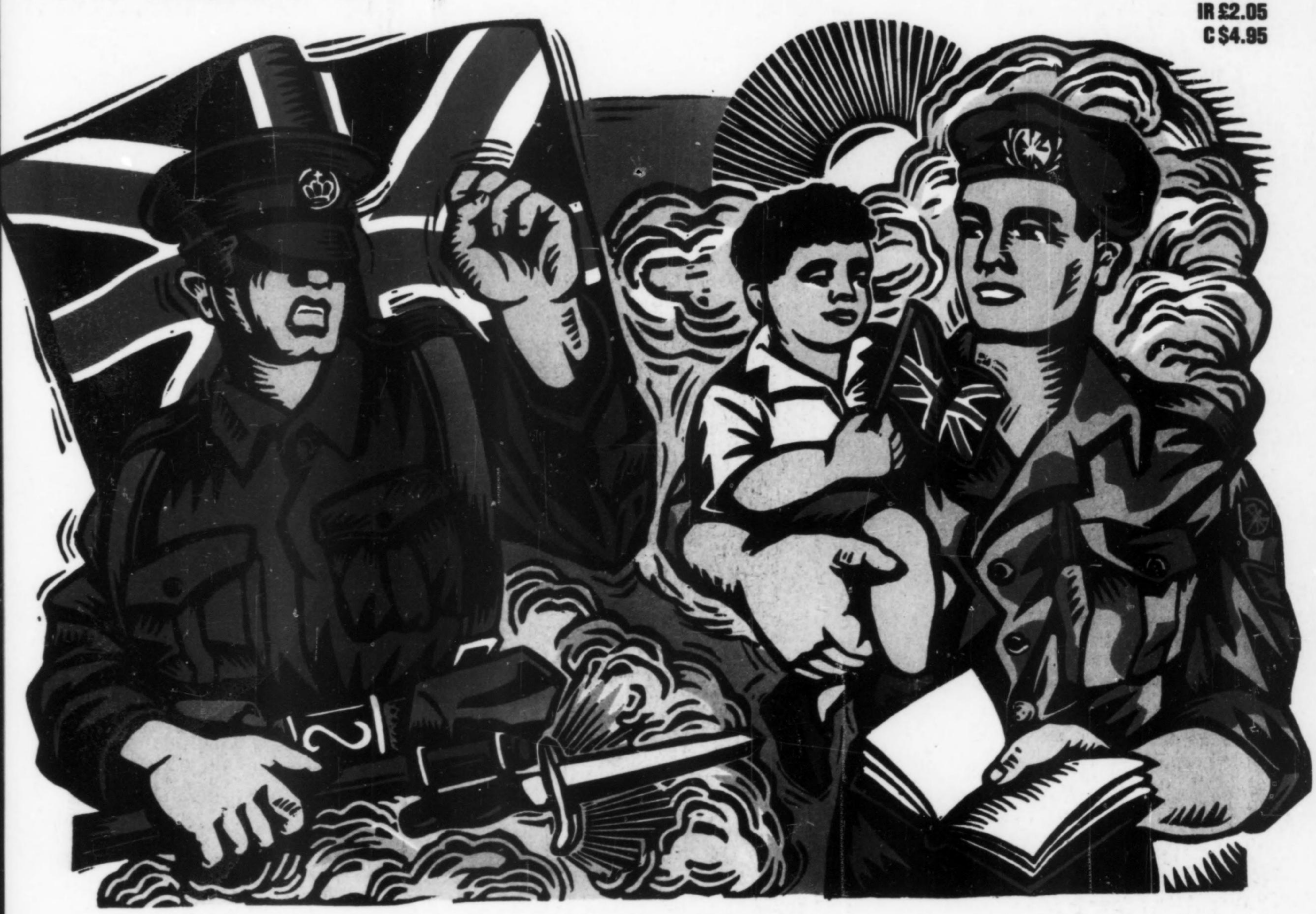

Who wants war?

Sarah Benton on choosing to fight
Alexander Cockburn's view from the States
Maria Manning: A tale of two demos

PLUS: Marc Cooper in Cuba; Stephen Bayley on commerce and culture; Wynne Godley on devaluation and incomes policy; Social Trends; and Jaci Stephen's new TV column

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Committee to Stop War in the Gulf
LEWISHAM PENSIONERS ACTION

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Gentle liberator

Colin Ward

John Hewetson died just before Christmas. He belonged to that élite of medical practitioners from posh family backgrounds who, by choice, spent their working lives in poor districts and were rewarded by the devotion of their patients.

In 1945, when he was casualty officer at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, he was sentenced with other editors from the anarchist Freedom Press, Vernon Richards and Philip Sansom, to nine months in jail for seducing members of the forces from their duty. Wormwood Scrubs was just over the road from his regular job, and he was in great demand for consultation, not only from fellow inmates, but from prison officers, for advice on their family problems.

For John spent a lifetime in quiet propaganda for what he, in his cordial way, called a sexually affirmative outlook. There must be many elderly women readers who remember the liberation provided by a trip to his first shabby little surgery for the contraceptive help that was hard to find in the early postwar years.

In 1951, a wave of child murders with sexual overtones led to his writing, between surgeries, a pamphlet on *Sexual Freedom for the Young*, drawing on the work of Malinowski and Reich, and recently reprinted (in *The Raven* no 4 from Freedom Press). He remarked two years ago that: "I did a lot of work on birth control from my earliest days because anxiety about getting pregnant was tremendously common when I was first in practice. It was an enormous factor in preventing working-class women from enjoying their love-making, and this was especially true in those who most believed that they were more likely to 'fall pregnant' if they had an orgasm, and who used to try and inhibit their orgasms."

My memories of his practice in those days are of him doing his rounds in a white 1922 Rolls-Royce tourer, greeted by everyone in the street, and of a journey to an anarchist summer school in Liverpool in a 1937 Austin 7 with the door falling off.

After that, he settled down as the doyen of a very remarkable practice at the Elephant & Castle. One of his partners was Robert Ollendorff, the brother-in-law of Wilhelm Reich, another was John MacEwan, advocate of holistic medicine, and, later on, the husband-and-wife Petrioni team. I was on their list for decades, and the important thing, for me, was not the validity of the various claims of alternative medicine, but the fact that a range of alternatives to the orthodox views was *available* to every patient.

He and his partners were, for more than 30 years, the visiting medical officers for the Camberwell Reception Centre, the "resettlement unit" for homeless single people in south London, known as the Spike. He knew the accidental horrors of ordinary life that finally dumped men there, and he fought a long rearguard campaign against the civil servants of the DHSS who successfully achieved its closure. No one was interested in publishing his detailed statistical report on the Spike in 1983.

John knew more about the seamy side of life than anyone I ever met. The last time I heard from him, he was pouring scorn on John Selwyn Gummer's going on about "any form of fornication" and reflecting (in connection with Aids) about Schubert's picking up syphilis from the pretty chambermaid of the Esterhazy household, while dedicating his Fantasia in F Minor to her mistress. But who passed the contagion to the chambermaid? Naturally, the Count.

John Hewetson spent a lifetime as a doctor, patiently pushing down the class barriers in medicine that divide the sophisticated from the inhibited. There are people like him around today. But who has time for them when the emphasis is on making general practice cost-effective?

---

system: the transnational corporations. The answer lies in challenging it head on.

Colin Hines
Cardozo Road
London

Hollow victory

Fred Halliday's article on Hungary ("Eternal Hungary", 14 December 1990) referred to the tendency of the government to want to wind the clock back to the interwar years as its way of rejecting the period of Communist rule. One area that he briefly touched on is the question of the social changes following from the growth of a market economy within Hungary. This is already resulting in rising unemployment and increasing housing shortages.

While there is a developing community-action movement, separate from state and party, many people, like the government, are, as a Hungarian activist put it to me, "reaching back to the past for the conservative, Christian, nationalist values". Two examples of this "reaching back" are the growth of an anti-abortion movement, and the widespread prejudice against the gypsy minorities within the country. Growing social dislocation resulting from rapid economic change (stimulated by British and other multinationals looking for new markets) is likely to generate further racism and prejudice. The "triumph" of western over eastern European economies will then be completed by exporting our market solutions to social problems.

Barry Craig
Naburn
York

Correction

In "The Thatcher audit" (21/28 December 1990) by Nick Fielding, the first table contained an error. It was wrongly described as "areas of public spending in terms of percentage of GDP". This should, of course, have read GGE (general government expenditure).

THIS ENGLAND

£5 book tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please)

● One is forced to conclude that an outbreak of hostilities in the Gulf could be disastrous, not only for Haringey but for the world.
—Letter in the *Haringey Advertiser* (B Stirner)

● A survey asking accountants what they wanted for Christmas threw up two who requested their final exam papers. Houses, holidays, planes, cars, the actress Kim Basinger featured strongly, and one even wanted 5,000 electricity shares.

Only eight asked for peace on earth, and one wanted a baby penguin.—*Times* (Derek Morgan)

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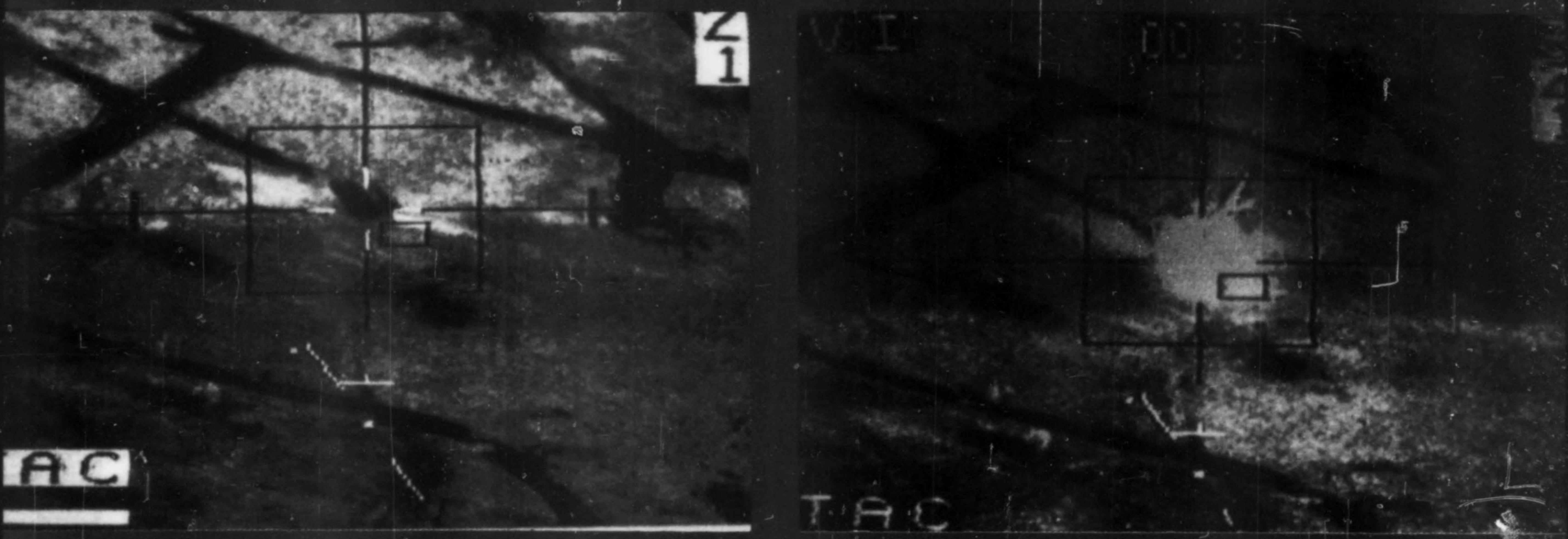
Video nasties

John Pilger on sanitised warfare and the great British silence



Kathy Acker trashes the Bonfire

Society Special: London and New York—Cities in Decay?

Tampa Bay Racism: Ellis Cashmore on Superbowl

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PLUS WAR REPORTS: David Langsam in Israel; Alexander Cockburn in America; Sarah Baxter in Westminster; Steve Platt in Hoxton; Caroline Ellis with peace campers' families

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Magnum

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Mean streets
Most New Yorkers want out—William Kornblum asks why

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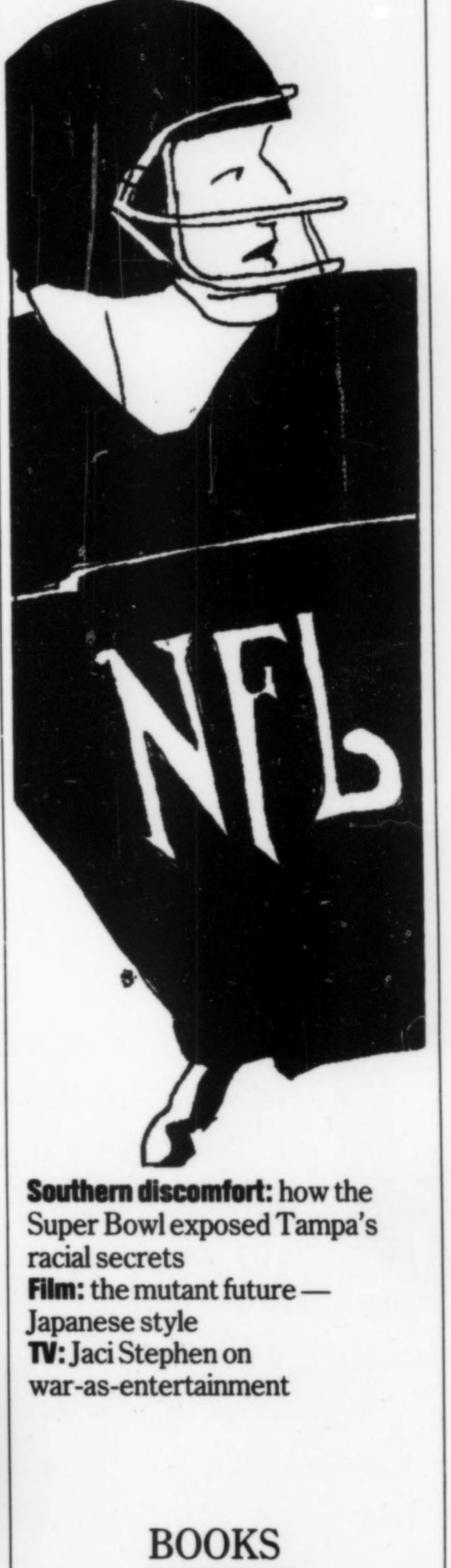

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FRINGE BENEFITS

Cities of spectacle

Colin Ward

Among the merry pranksters of the sixties were the International Situationists and the Kabouters. Guy Debord, a leading exponent of the first, wrote his analysis *Le Société du Spectacle* (Paris, 1967), and Constant Nieuwenhuys, of the second, produced *New Babylon* (Amsterdam, 1966). This proclaimed the world city of leisure, the *ambiance totale* for *homo ludens*, which he explained as, "the world man evokes while at play".

Everything begins as a fantasy and ends as an industry. A few weeks ago, in Sheffield, I was talking at the annual conference of the Institute of British Geographers. Among the endless simultaneous sessions was a whole day with nine specialists on Cities of Spectacle.

We learned how smart guys, image-manipulators, con men and boosters have joined in persuading British cities that their fortunes can be revived through presenting themselves as major locations for "spectacular" events. "These may be seen as engendering economic development, as enhancing or promoting a new image for the city, as stimulating investment in infrastructure, or as part of a policy of area rehabilitation; while certain cities are also experiencing the manipulation of an older built environment to create 'spectacular' heritage sites."

The venue was right. A councillor, a businessman and a planner discussed the merits of Sheffield's decision to host the 1991 World Student Games on the assumption of sponsorship from commerce and TV that never came. The citizens' bill is expected to be £200 million. The debt bequeathed to Glasgow by a year as City of Culture was also debated.

But the New Babylon was on our doorstep in the form of the Meadowhall Centre outside Sheffield, opened last September with 1.25 million square feet of "retail and related leisure functions". A guided tour was laid on for the geographers, who were well-placed to test the validity of the comments made last month by the editors of *The Architects' Journal*:

"Meadowhill has streets with proper names, like High Street and Park Lane; it has a public square in which tourists can sit in pavement cafés; it has an equivalent of a local newspaper in the shape of a video wall; it even has its own police force. But don't get too excited, because it's all a sham... the districts are just different stage sets, the video wall is sponsored by Coca-Cola, and the police force is just a band of security men whose presence is meant to deter any deviance from narrow social norms. And, of course, nobody lives there. It denies everything that a town is for. It has no creative mix of functions—just a great slab of retailing, plus fast food. It has no government, aside from the autocracy of corporate centrism. It allows no expression of community or of individuality. It does not enhance freedom, it diminishes it, by sapping the economic lifeblood of real towns."

Then there's the sad saga of garden festivals. When Heseltine brought the message to Liverpool in 1981, the outside contractors provided not a single job for local people. Stoke-on-Trent added Waterworld, a ski slope and tenpin bowling to its festival in 1986. Next year, Ebbw Vale shifts the scene to prettying up the dead pits and foundries out in the country.

Over a century ago, a poet urged that the great city was not the place of "deposits of produce merely", nor "the place of the tallest and costliest buildings or shops selling goods from the rest of the earth". It was the place "where the populace rises at once against the never-ending audacity of elected persons", "where outside authority enters always after the precedence of inside authority".

There, declaimed Walt Whitman, is where the great city stands.

A question of class

"One way to define the under, working, or lower class is to note that its members never write books about social class"—so says Paul Fussell in his review of Arthur Marwick's *Class: image and reality in Britain, France and the USA since 1930* ("Rank and file", 11 January). This is just the kind of notion that encourages middle-class academics to think of themselves as an intellectual élite, and working-class people to think that the writing of books on a subject that looks at *their* lives is something beyond their capabilities. I have news for Paul: many working-class people like myself are very much involved in the examination, discussion, and writing on this subject, and we have no intention of leaving it to our social and intellectual betters.

Social science and humanities students who are black, who are working-class, who are single parents living on council estates, have, over the years, produced dissertations, theses, and, indeed, published books that examine class relations, class attitudes, class divisions, the relationship of both gender and race to class, and have done so in a way that middle-class writers are not able to do. We write histories of *our* class from *our* perspective; we write of our relationship to other classes and groups in society in a way that only we can.

When we return home at the end of a day's study, we are still working class; we haven't become members of any other class because we are gaining a formal education—and there are thousands of other working-class men and women who could also gain much and give much in an academic environment if given the chance.

Paul Fussell might like to think that working-class people don't write books about social class. Thankfully, he is sorely mistaken, and his remark does nothing to encourage more working-class people to do so. Or perhaps his snobbery informs him that working-class people don't read *NSS*, and thus his remarks would go unchallenged?

Debra Fenn
Orpington

THIS ENGLAND

£5 book tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please)

● Everybody knows that making mistakes is all part of growing up.

Especially grown-ups, that's why they sit down and tell you the facts of life.

But did they ever mention where bonds come from?

Or anything about unit trusts?—Halifax advertisement in the *Radio Times* (Mike Barnes)

● Animal rights campaigners yesterday released 163 animals from a laboratory at Lancashire Polytechnic in Preston. One animal apparently was trodden on and killed in the incident.—*Guardian* (Ron Chatterjee)

NEW STATESMAN
SOCIETY

1 February 1991
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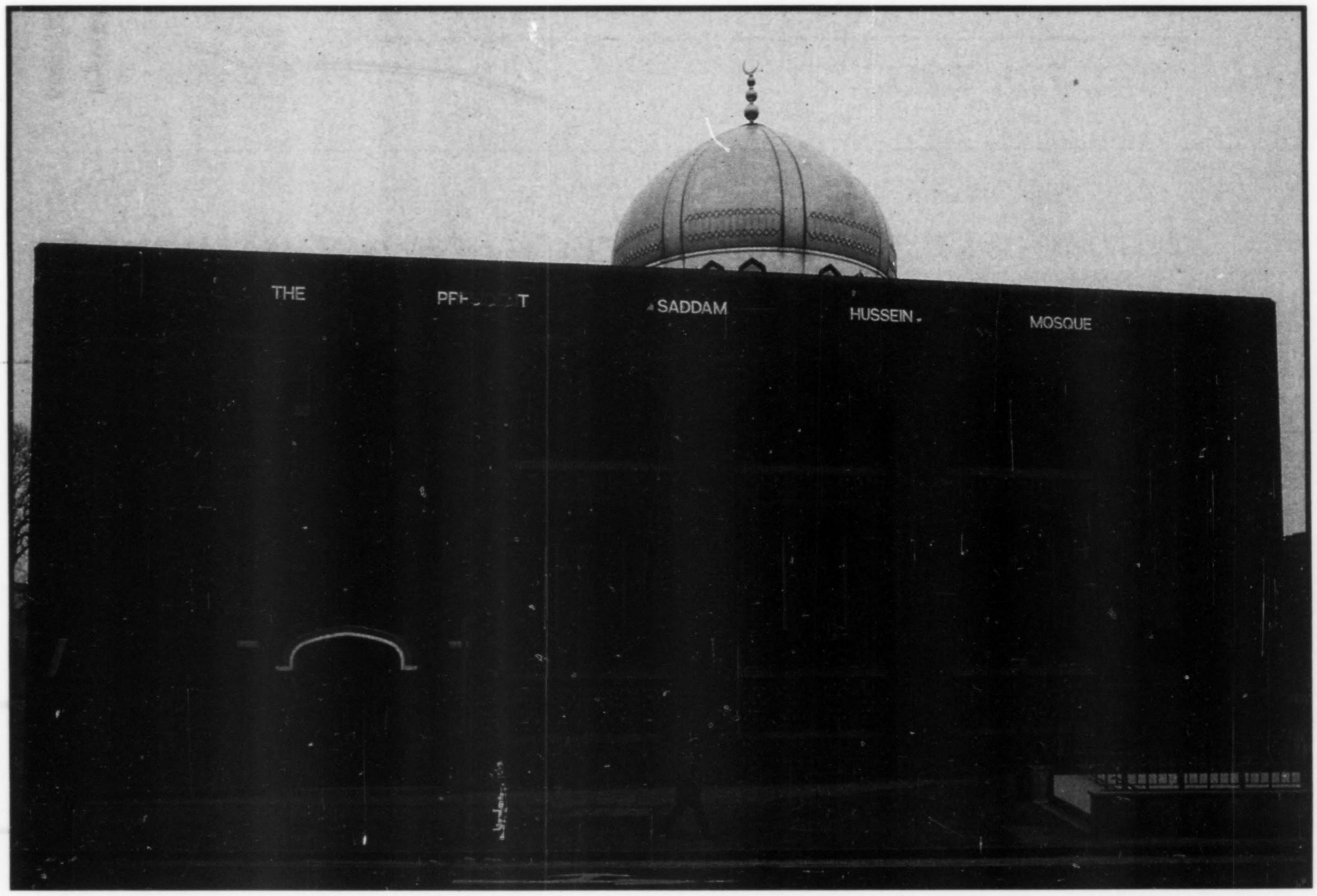
'Which side are you on?'

British Muslims and the war



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INCORRECT VOLUME NUMBER, SHOULD READ VOLUME 4.

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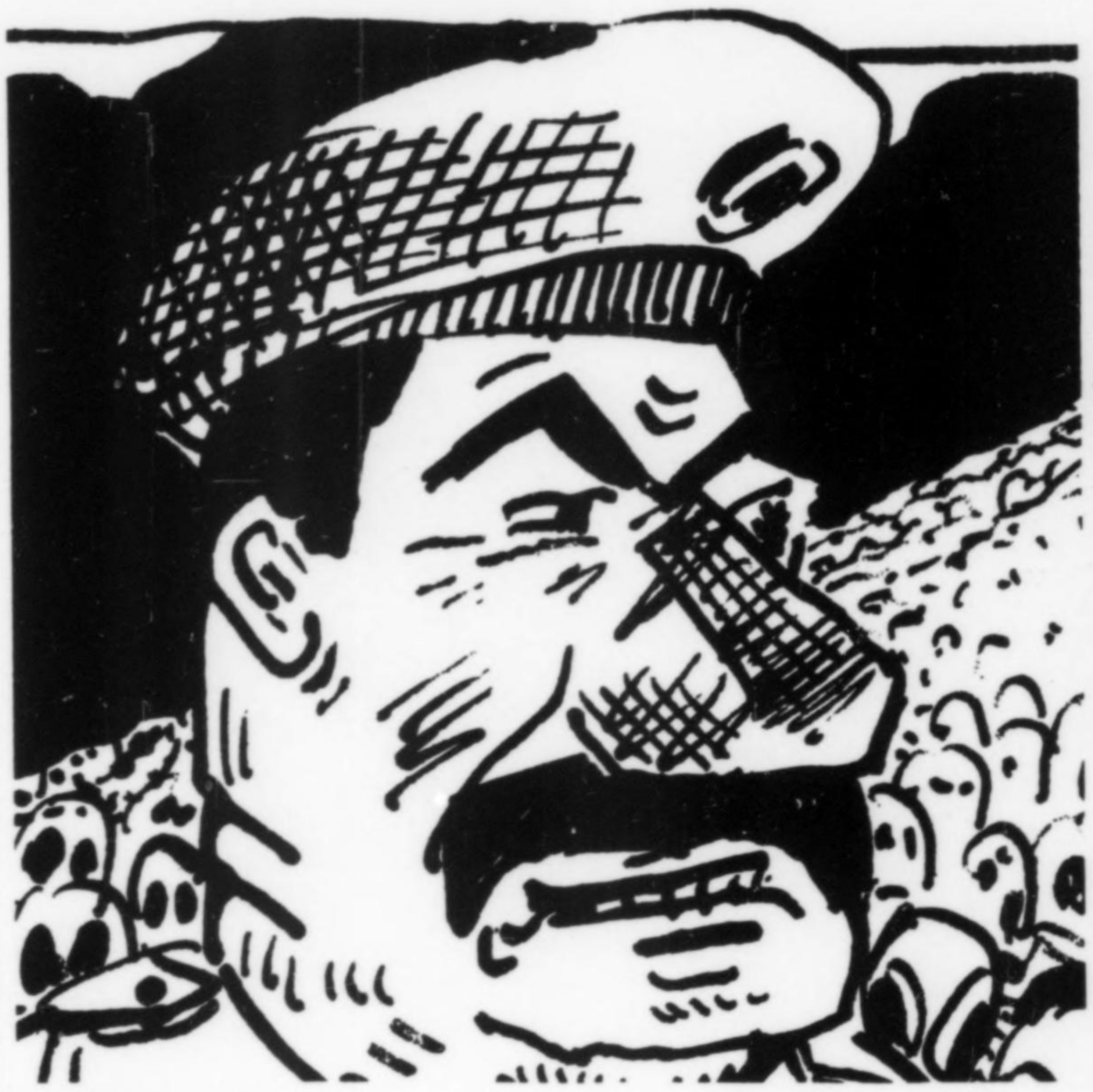

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FRINGE BENEFITS

Mondragon unvisited

Colin Ward

In the seventies, foreseeing the coming devastation of the steel, tin-plate and mining industries of the valleys, the Welsh TUC sent a delegation to the Basque town of Mondragon in Spain to see if there were clues for survival in the remarkable network of cooperatives founded there since the war—providing schools, forges, foundries, factories, horticultural and building establishments, retail stores, and, most important of all, a bank and finance house, the Caja Laboral Popular.

They came back with mixed impressions, according to their preconceptions, summed up by the sad conclusion that: "It couldn't happen here." A very thorough study came out in 1977 from the Anglo-German Foundation, entitled *The Mondragon Achievement*.

I've never been there, but I know several people who have. In the eighties, Italian economist Sebastiano Brusco told me: "Someone with your assumptions would see the whole set of enterprises as the work of a bunch of enlightened, but paternalistic, employers with a social conscience." And I felt thoroughly chastened when Mike Bower, of the Sheffield Co-operative Development Group, argued that: "Naïve and unrealistic expectations are causing significant opportunities to make real progress in improving the quality of working life to be squandered, because attention and energy is being diverted away from the major advantages which cooperative working can offer."

New news of Mondragon is hard to find in our press, so I was delighted to get the "Fall 1990" issue of the *Bulletin of the International Communal Studies Association* (PO Box Ramat-Efal 52960, Israel), in which Sol Encer describes what he learned on a trip last August. Sol thinks, as I do, that any attempt to run modern industrial production on a non-capitalist basis is important for you and me.

In case you never heard, the enterprises there were started by José Maria Arizmendi, who, after years in gaol for being on the losing side in the civil war, became a priest and cunningly exploited the interstices in the Franco straitjacket: starting a technical school, a savings bank, and workshops to rehabilitate a devastated Basque community. The founders of FAGOR, set up in 1956, and now the largest manufacturer of domestic appliances in Spain, were products of his Escuela Politecnica.

When Sol moved on to FAGOR itself—slightly ahead of its competitors, Electrolux and Siemens—he was cheered to reflect that: "This is big-league stuff and indicates that a cooperative system can be at least as efficient and forward-looking as its capitalist rivals."

But Sol spent three hours with one of the surviving founders, Jesus Larranga, who said that, if he was setting it up today, he would not have chosen a co-op structure. Encel concluded that what had happened was the familiar phenomenon of "goal displacement", meaning that any organisation that survives for any length of time "will acquire new *raisons d'être,* which were not there at the beginning". The quest for efficiency and competitiveness, "stressed by all the people who spoke to us", clearly overrode the original goals of a cooperative ideology, "such as an egalitarian wage structure".

If you bothered to trace the history of the Cooperative Permanent Building Society and its modern apotheosis as Nationwide, you could witness the same goal displacement. Do we judge that success is the kiss of death for any cooperative enterprise, and that failure is glorious, or do we need an entirely new set of criteria?

Junkie doctor

Colin Ward's sympathetic memoir of the late Dr John Hewetson ("Gentle liberator", 18 January) oddly omits any reference to his role as one of the "junkies' doctors". During the growth of heroin and cocaine addiction in the early 1960s, Hewetson and Ollendorf ran one of the few working-class NHS practices that took responsibility for prescribing and for care of addicts not only in their immediate neighbourhood, but all over London. Though they were condemned, along with other doctors, in the Brain Report in 1965, a few years later, when asked to describe its treatment facilities, King's College Hospital listed Robert Ollendorf's weekly drug clinic as its only treatment facility.

The Reverend Kenneth Leech
St Botolph's Crypt Centre
London EC3

Colin Ward was not, entirely, to blame. He did include a reference to Hewetson's being "soft" on drugs—but the article was cut.

Half a loaf

David Marquand dismisses feminist arguments about citizenship out of hand ("Deaf to duty's call", 25 January). To write of citizenship in the context of a challenge to male political power is apparently to pile the poor beast so high "that it buckles at the knees". How does he suppose women are to excercise effective control over their own lives when the laws that regulate them are made from a male perspective by a parliament in which men outnumber women by 15 to one?

In addition, we are still overburdened by duties in the home, which men refuse to share equally. The citizenship ideal is worth salvaging—but only if both these problems are addressed. If Marquand thinks we will be palmed off with just a quarter of the loaf, he has another think coming.

Rebecca Walker
Fishponds
Bristol

THIS ENGLAND

£6 book tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please)

- The broadcasters' sensitivity to the international situation has even led to the postponement of a wildlife programme. An edition of *Survival* will not be shown on Channel 4 because it depicts the way migrating birds cause havoc with the Israeli airforce. —*Sunday Times* (S S Chahal)

- What a lot there was to learn about the new Prime Minister from the way he signed the visitors' book at the British embassy in Riyadh during his whirlwind tour of Saudi Arabia. After writing: "John Major, 10 Downing Street, London", he added "SW1A 2AA".—*Sunday Express* (George Moor)

NEW STATESMAN SOCIETY

8 February 1991
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> ‘I do not understand this squeamishness about the use of gas. I am strongly in favour of using poison gas against uncivilised tribes...’

Winston Churchill

Alex Cockburn on double standards
John Pilger on deceit

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PLUS: Wynne Godley: in praise of incomes policy; Edward Pearce on political correspondents; Jeremy Laurance on Erin Pizzey; Lesley Abdela on women voters

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The allies are ignoring the lessons of war, argues Commander Robert Green

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Women made up the majority of voters in Britain for the first time in 1987. The next election could turn on how their views differ from those of men, says Lesley Abdela

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Everybody is talking the language of incomes policy, but no one will admit it, says Wynne Godley

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Plus: D J Taylor on Roger Scruton, novelist; Spaceship Earth

FRINGE BENEFITS

On your bike

Colin Ward

My praise for Dutch transport policy (23 November 1990) brought an interesting response from a British couple living in The Hague. They share my enthusiasm for the Dutch approach, but add: "Where they sadly fall short is on attitudes to safety. Did *you* see a single cyclist wearing a safety helmet? We've never seen anyone, and it seems an especially serious hazard for small children and soft-skulled babies, who are transported by bike, pillion-fashion from nine months of age. Bike shops do not stock such things and, what's more, many riders carry neither lights nor protective clothing."

Dutch friends respond to their alarm with derision. Now I certainly did notice the habits they mention. But there is another point of view.

We've a nephew in London who, having twice been knocked off his bike by motorists, invariably wears a helmet. He reports that Christopher Chope, minister for roads and traffic, was taken aback by the uproar that followed his address to the "Bike for a Breath of Fresh Air" rally held in Trafalgar Square, when his one word of encouragement to cyclists was that they should wear helmets.

The reason why members of the London Cycling Campaign were outraged by this ministerial advice was explained by another speaker, Mark McCarthy, professor of community medicine at University College, London: "We pointed out that cyclists and pedestrians are called 'vulnerable road users' because they are *not* protected by steel boxes. Helmets are an individual solution to a collective problem; if cyclists wear helmets they will never force government to find a solution to the real problems."

At a personal level (if my son Ben is reading this, I'll eagerly pay for his helmet), I'm in favour of self-defence. But at a social level, I'm outraged at the way owners of lethal machines blame the victims, and I'm forced to notice cultural differences. Even the American Express guide says: "Don't even *think* of driving in Amsterdam." It explains that: "People of all ages use their bicycles in all weathers to commute to work, to go shopping, to transport their children and exercise their dogs." When this becomes true of London you can abandon your helmet.

John Adams, also from University College, who has made himself unpopular through his insistence on providing statistical evidence for unpalatable truths, argues in his books *Transport Planning* (1981) and *Risk and Freedom* (1985) about worthy safety measures like seat-belts in cars or helmets for motorcyclists, that: "People do not want accidents, but they do want the freedom to take risks." And that: "The principal achievement of road safety regulations has been a redistribution of the burden of risk from vehicle occupants to pedestrians and cyclists."

It's a mistake to think that the campaign for safe cycling in London is flying in the face of history. The London Accident Analysis Unit reports a 43 per cent increase in pedal cycling traffic crossing central London between 1987 and 1989. At the same time, the increase in traffic snarl-ups is attributed to the mere 13 per cent of commuters who have the arrogance to bring their cars into the city centre. Even the Department of Transport has recognised the London Cycling Campaign's proposed 1,000-mile cycle network in London as a viable future.

Slowly the phlegmatic British are getting more like those wildly irresponsible anarchic Dutch.

The London Cycling Campaign is at 3 Stamford Street, London SE1 9NT.

---

identifies strongly with the rationalist tradition. You cannot pack economic realism at the front end of the paper, and rank mysticism at the back end.

Colin A M Duncan
Assistant professor
Queen's University
Kingston
Canada

Bullseye!

Jaci Stephen, in her first TV column for the *NSS* (18 January) examines darts somewhat vitriolically. But, strangely enough, she does it mainly through the commentators—for example, Sid Waddell—who is as big a pain to darts players as Miss Stephen (I take it, it is Miss) would like to become.

You do not have to love our sport Miss Stephen. You do not even have to watch it. However, if you did open your eyes—or, more importantly, your mind—and were less intent on scoring Brownie points as a journalist, and as a woman, you might even discover that a lot of women play the game as well. Also, that among the millions who *do* enjoy the game, not all are "cholesterol freaks". You might also find that a few have IQs even approaching your own.

Bill Haywood
Zeleborgasse
Vienna
Austria

THIS ENGLAND

£5 book token for entries printed (Postcards please)

- The contestants in Miss World will not be wearing swimsuits on stage this year.

Organiser Eric Morley said yesterday: "That should stop these attacks about sexism.
—*Daily Mail* (Janet Hadley)

- In a survey published yesterday by the First Division Association, the trade union for senior civil servants, 97 per cent of respondents had felt under stress in the previous 12 months. Using a photocopier as part of their daily job was among the stress factors mentioned. They do not like it; they would not have to do it in the private sector.
—Guardian (A Bibb)

- Liverpool's two local radio stations are operating a self-imposed ban on certain hit records during the Gulf war.

BBC bosses in London have sent Radio Merseyside a list of 67 pop singles "deemed unsuitable for air play". The songs include John Lennon's "Give Peace A Chance".—Merseymart (John D Hamilton)

- Robert Atkins, the sports minister, flew to Australia yesterday with a message from John Major for England's cricketers. To boost morale in the Gulf, Atkins said, the Prime Minister had instructed him "to tell the England side they must produce a victory in the fourth Test—there's a war on."—The *Times* (Derek Morgan)

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The third world's war

Jeremy Seabrook on the view from the south

Society Special: Local government in crisis

John Pilger: The killing fields of Iraq

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PLUS: The Rushdie fatwa—two years on; Spanish customs: Fred Halliday on condoms and Catholics; Philip Bassett: unemployment and the marginals; Bryan Gould interviewed

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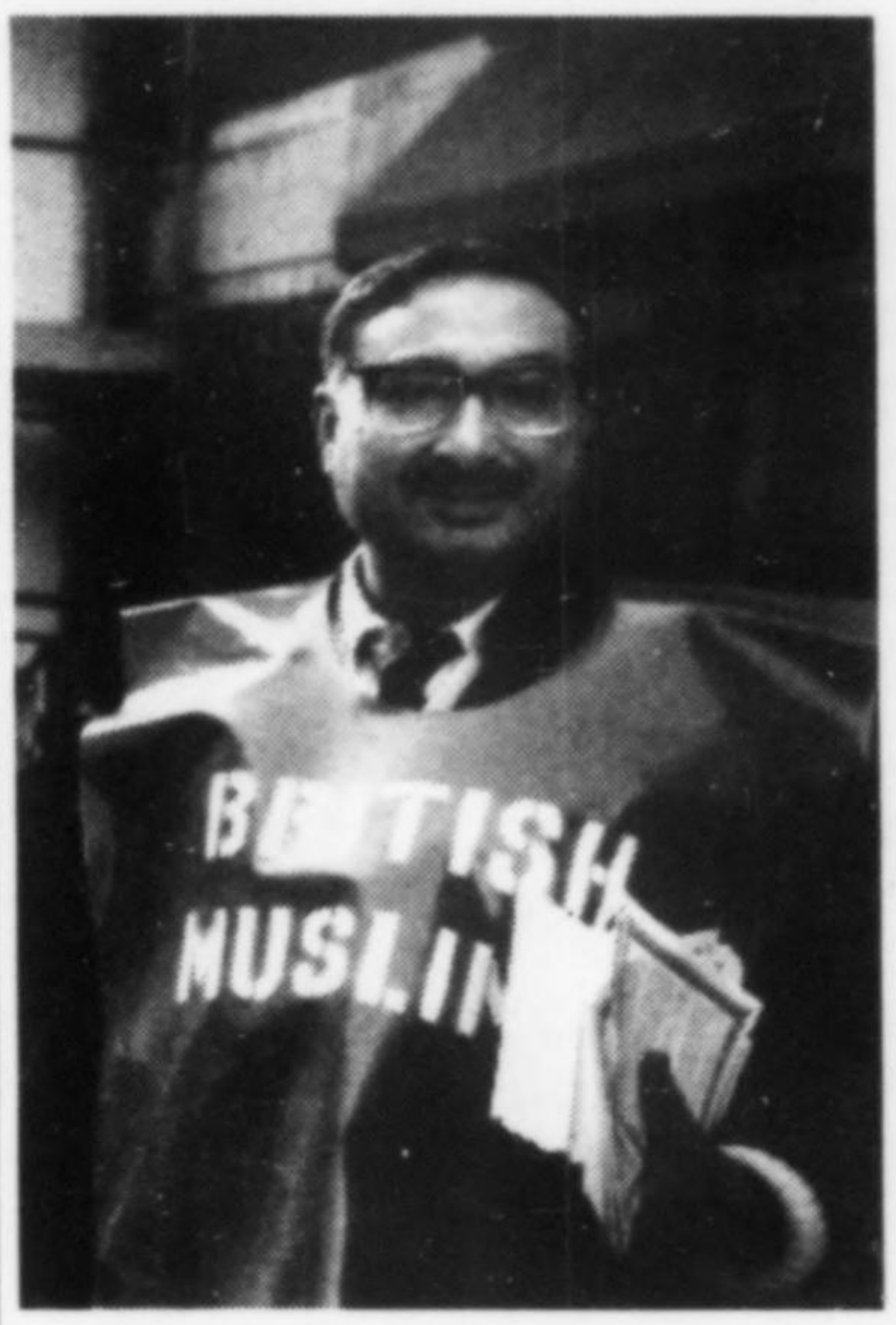

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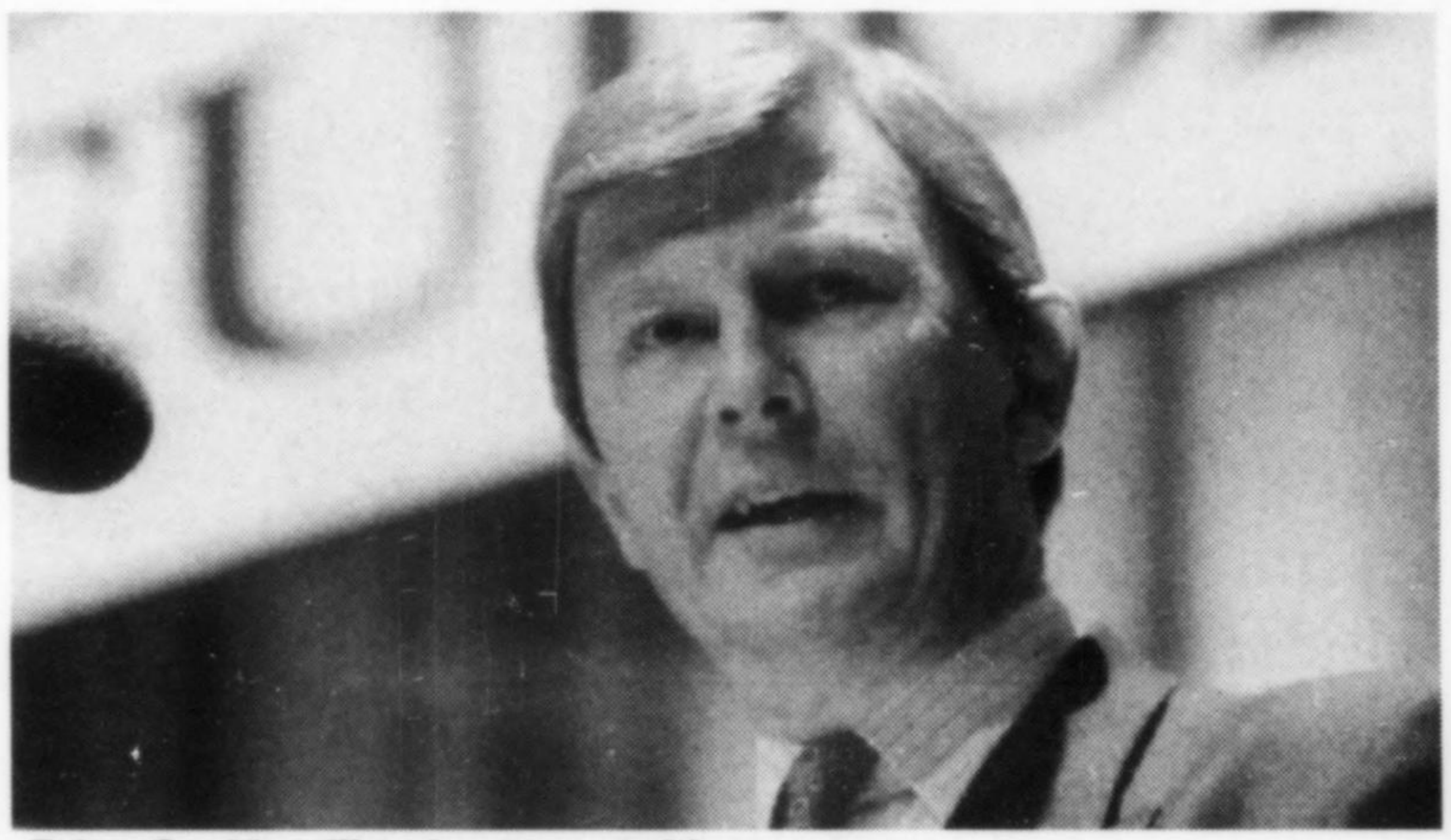

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Since Franco's death 15 years ago, Spain has been transformed into a typical western democracy. But, as Fred Halliday explains, its problems are not over

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FRINGE BENEFITS

Zest for living

Colin Ward

The right phrase is *élan vital*. We just don't have the right kind of word for that engagement with living that enables some people to endure appalling misfortunes in their personal lives, and bounce back with a new approach in public.

Malcolm MacEwan is that kind of character. But underlying his involvement is an endless sense of fun. In the 1970s, I remember him challenging our lads to race him to the cairn on top of a hill on Exmoor. He got there first not to make the point that it was possible for an old chap with a tin leg, but for the pleasure of seeing them discover the chocolate bars he had inserted there.

Now he's coming up to 80 and it's typical that he begins his autobiography, out next week (*The Greening of a Red*, Pluto paperbacks, £8.95), with the statement that one of the best things that ever happened to him was the motorbike crash that lost him his right leg when he was 21.

The reason was that months spent in an Inverness nursing home made him a reader, which he never was at the narrow and philistine English public school (Rossall) to which his otherwise intelligent parents sent him. And becoming a reader in the 1930s made him a Marxist, anxious to put his law degree at the service of the prewar Glasgow edition of the *Daily Worker*, as well as becoming a county councillor in Ross and Cromarty.

Ignazio Silone used to say that he belonged to the biggest party in the world, the ex-communists, and, like many others, MacEwan joined their ranks in 1956, after 13 years on the *Daily Worker* as foreign editor and parliamentary correspondent. He's proud of having been the holder of a silver cup as parliamentary press gallery golf champion. He believes that the Labour Party dug its own grave after its 1945 triumph—partly through the disgraces of its foreign policy in Greece and Korea—and he has a melancholy satisfaction in finding his opinions from those days amply confirmed by the subsequent publication of official documents.

His departure from *The Daily Worker*, "which seemed like a second amputation at the time", was a blessing in disguise. "We had been living in a self-created party ghetto," he explains. While his communist record ruled him out of jobs on the *News Chronicle* and the *Manchester Guardian*, he found a niche in *The Architects' Journal*.

It may seem strange that a trade weekly should be the right place for someone like MacEwan, but I've known it even longer than him and can see perfectly well why he found it "one of the happiest and most stimulating places to work", and how it led him "almost by accident, to take the first step towards an ecological approach to politics". He moved on to edit the journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and once again was the gadfly, desperately trying to push his readers beyond their self-satisfaction.

A few years later, living on Exmoor, he found himself a government-nominated member of the National Park Committee there and found that his task was to rubber-stamp the decisions of the land-owning mafia who were in control. He rebelled, and he and his wife Ann became *the* authorities on conservation in national parks.

It's hard to draw conclusions from this lifetime of zestful participation. But, once a Conservative government had drawn him into the charmed circle of the Great and the Good who run the National Parks, he used his battling style to deadly effect: "Consensus often had to be fought for by confrontation" is the way he puts it, and a lifetime of involvement in everyday issues explains how this particular red turned green.

---

why the *Sunday Correspondent* folded.

On the other hand, John Pilger is a treat.

Alix Coleman
St Mary's Terrace
London W2

Time-expired?

R W Johnson ("Spoils of war", 8 February) may not have had the benefit of an education at the University of Wales, like his hero Neil Kinnock, but his inability to carry out simple sums threatens to justify Kenneth Clarke's enthusiasm for the National Curriculum.

If 71 per cent of voters were dissatisfied with Thatcher in November and 25 per cent were happy, and if the ratings for Major are now 15 to 61, there is no "net difference of no less than 92 per cent" between the two. That figure is obtained by double counting. Instead, the result could be obtained by 20 per cent of dissatisfied voters becoming don't knows, and another 36 per cent deciding to be satisfied.

In the same paragraph, Johnson upbraids the Labour Party for its failure to dispose of a spent leader. Perhaps the *NSS* could show it the way with ruthless action against a time-expired columnist.

Beryl Brent
Bangor Road
Bethesda, Gwynedd

THIS ENGLAND

£5 book token for entries printed (Postcards please)

• The Association's Working Party on Libraries and the Arts has been reconstituted as a sub-committee and renamed the Libraries, Arts and Leisure Sub-committee to reflect its wider interests.

A task force has been set up to help the Sub-committee take action on issues concerned with libraries and leisure.—*Library Association Record* (Jeanette Thornhill)

• A former army sergeant was spared from jail yesterday after Salisbury crown court was told that he wanted to re-enlist for service in the Gulf. Gary Lilley was fined £400 after admitting stealing from Marks & Spencer. Judge Whitley said that he would normally have been jailed, but "in the circumstances" someone with your experience could well be required by the army.—*Times* (Michael Rubenstein)

• I am writing to you with reference to your front-page article "A million men wait for the clash of arms", in which my unexpurgated views on the anxiety of death were displayed.

I would have preferred, however, for the foul language to have been deleted—just because we find ourselves confronted by the horrors of war, there is still no reason to suspend the niceties of society.—Letter in the *Independent* (Tim Beecham)

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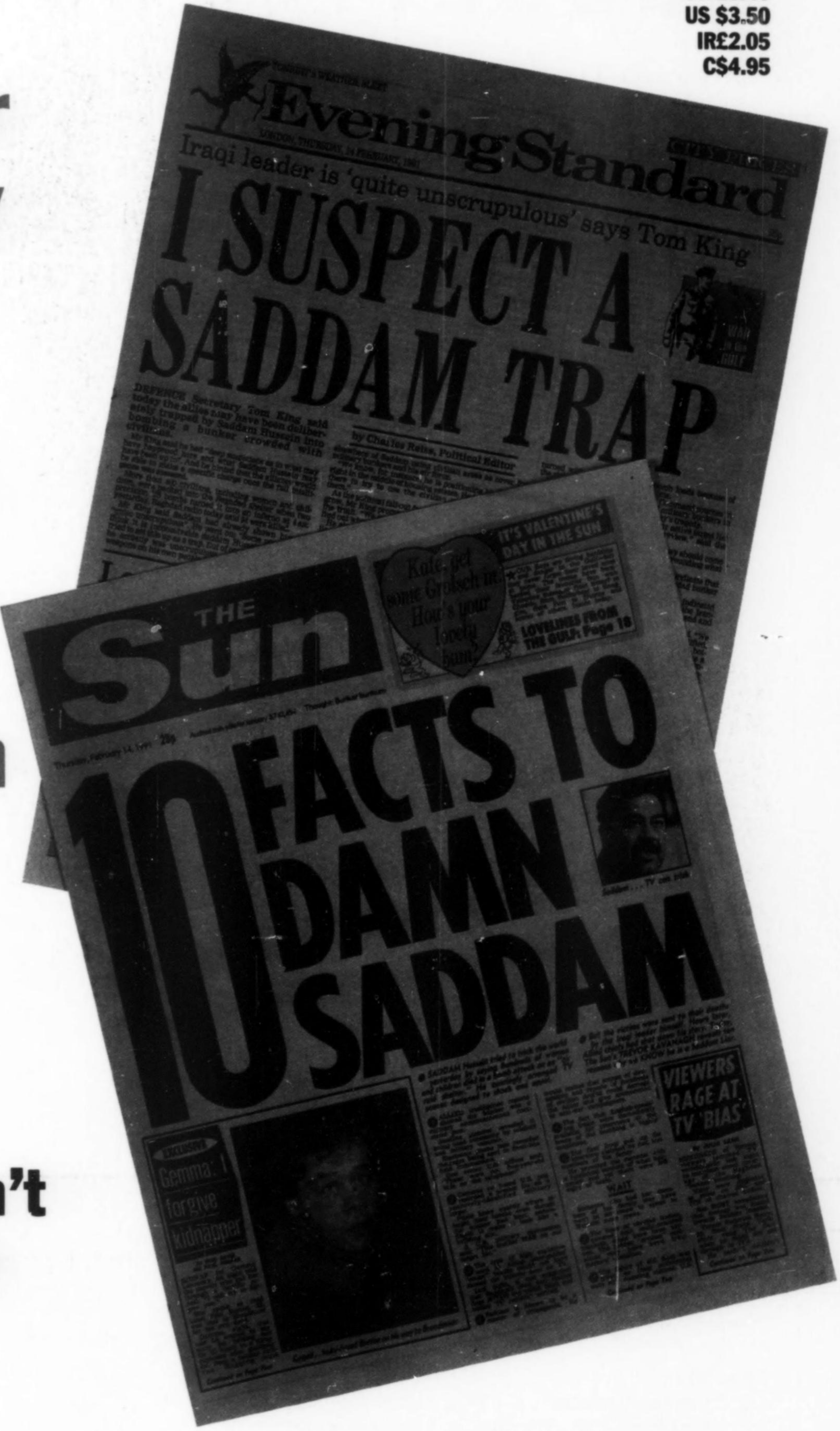
‘A newspaper that tells only part of the truth is a million times preferable to one that tells the truth to harm its country’

Ronald Spark,
chief Sun leader writer



Evening Standard

LONDON, THURSDAY, 14 FEBRUARY, 1991

Iraqi leader is ‘quite unscrupulous’ says Tom King

I SUSPECT A SADDAM TRAP

DEFENCE Secretary Tom King said today the allies may have been deliberately trapped by Saddam Hussein into bombing a bunker crowded with civilians.

by Charles Reiss, Political Editor

THE Sun

Kate, get some Grolsch in. How's your lovely bum?

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Midlands

It is often said that the Midlands is the key swing area, presumably because people think the north is all Labour and the south all Tory. In fact, the Midlands only has as many critical marginals as the Pennines or London, and these can be divided into a number of groups that behave differently: west Midlands urban constituencies (including four in southern Birmingham), east Midlands urban seats, and ex-mining seats (Groups C-E)—this last group has been swinging away from Labour as the basis of its economy changes.

Southern England

Just as important as the Midlands seats are two related groups (F and G) of seats in southern England: the booming "hi-tech" new and expanding towns, such as Swindon, and the economically more static southern urban marginals in towns such as Bristol and Southampton. These seats were all very poor ground for Labour during Thatcher's eighties, but, with the threat of rising unemployment now at its highest in the south of England, and mortgages at their most punishing, Labour must hope to reverse the long-term trend.

The north and Merseyside

Two regions that have long been moving the other way, from the Tories towards Labour, are the far north and Merseyside. Labour may be confident of taking seats next time that it has never won before—not even in the landslide victories of 1945 and 1966—such as Tynemouth and Wallasey. Both areas may be included in a single group (H), but Scotland (I) and Wales (J) should be treated separately. Scotland has been Labour's best region over the past couple of decades, but there is evidence that the Conservatives' slump may have "bottomed out"— their results in the May local elections north of the border showed a slight improvement since 1987. All this categorisation leaves only three seats out in the cold (Group K), although one of these is that with the Conservatives' narrowest margin, York.

Considering the plight of the economy and the unpopularity of the poll tax, it is easy to conceive of a Conservative defeat in the next general election. However, when looking at the individual seats and their cluster groupings, a different picture emerges. A number of the critical groups have had a recent history of relative resistance to Labour's appeal. The magnitude of Labour's task is brought home by the study of the battlegrounds where the election is actually going to be decided.

The fourth, updated, edition of Robert Waller's "Almanac of British Politics" is published by Routledge on 7 March

FRINGE BENEFITS

Madam chairperson

Colin Ward

We've all been conscious of the efforts to rewrite the accepted history of the arts, with a new stress on the uncelebrated achievements of women as composers, as artists or as architects, often with men taking the credit. This new interest is spreading to other fields. For example, one of the subthemes of Anne Power's *Property Before People* (published by Allen & Unwin), a book on the management of twentieth-century council housing, is the gradual and deliberate exclusion of women from the housing management world, and its consequences.

But there's a related area on the other side of the fence: the emergence of women as tenant organisers on the kind of estate or project where people stay at home with the power cut off, leaving public areas to roving packs of dogs or teenagers. Both in Britain and the US, they have braved not just hostility, but frightening physical danger.

Plenty of us remember Mrs Crummie, who started the Craigmillar Festival Society in the 1970s to throw a little light on the forgotten fringe of Edinburgh. When the housing department was closed from Friday to Monday, homeless families were automatically diverted to her to find them somewhere to stay for the night. And in the 1980s, Frances McCall, who had lived in Calvay Road, Glasgow, for 20 years and reared her family there, rose to the challenge of the council's sudden conversion to co-op rehabilitation, and steered the Calvay Co-op to success, declaring that:

"When your area becomes a hard-to-let area, then you get a stigma attached to you. If you want to rent a television, or something, and you give your address, they go: 'Oh, no, no, I'm sorry you can't have that. That's a bad area you stay in.' So I'm glad to say that there are groups of initiatives in Glasgow where people say 'I live in a bad area but I am going to do something about it.'"

She did, and so did Dora Boatemah from Brixton. Interviewed in Joy Hatwood's *Tough Cookies* series on Radio 4, she explained her belief that: "The only way any area gets cleaned up is when the people clean it up for themselves." There is, in fact, a stereotype among the professionals of housing, both in Britain and America, that things get moving when a Big Black Momma-figure takes control, re-establishing a matriarchy over those improvident young men. This is both patronising and inaccurate.

Dora Boatemah was at pains to explain that she is 4 foot 9 inches tall. Her equivalents in the United States, with even harder battles to fight—like Marion Stamps of the Chicago Tenants' Organisation—rely on an absolute determination not to be put down or fobbed off, either by the administrative bureaucracy or by the local racketeers. Mary Benns of Baltimore Neighbourhood Inc told me that her endless struggle was to cajole the city administration into enforcing its own legislation. "It's not an issue of bravery," she said, "just persistence in hammering on the door until it opens."

Then there's Bertha Gilkey, chairwoman of a tenants' co-operative in St Louis. When she came to Glasgow, positively glittering, she explained to Rob Cowan: "When the ghettos were burning, I had an Afro hairstyle and looked like a revolutionary. That was the way to get grants—they thought it would stop us burning the city. When Jimmy Carter became US president, I wore my hair up in a bun and dressed conservatively, and more federal money came our way. And these [indicating her current style] are my Reaganomics clothes."

Male members of tenant organisations are expected to adhere to certain routines learned from trade union branches and Citrine's *ABC of Chairmanship*. It is both an additional burden, and an extra triumph for women in this role, that both friends and adversaries rely on them to use their own personal characteristics to advance a social goal, and to carry other people with them.

This is more than is ever demanded of men, and I hope that someone is busy recording this particular feminine achievement.

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The blood of others

John Pilger on the new age of imperialism

Jolyon Jenkins: Who'll rule Kuwait?; Denis MacShane: Slave labour in the Gulf; Lines of peace: 81 poets one voice; Society Special: Education; Mat Coward opposes progress

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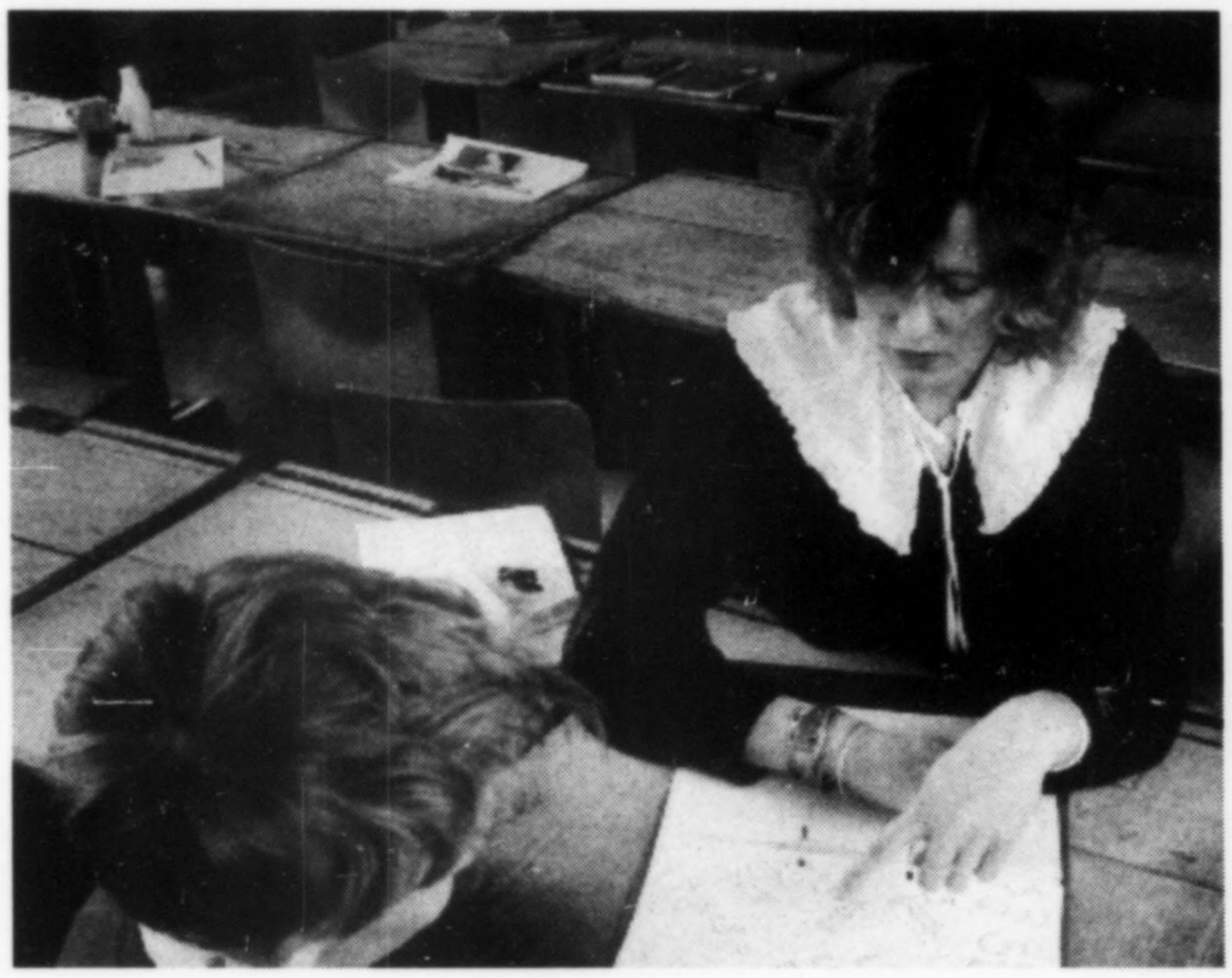

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"home truths". At least one Labour Knesset member voted to ban Tsomet from the 1988 election after Raful commented that the higher birth-rate of Palestinians was unnatural and motivated by nationalism. Both Techiya and Tsomet joined the narrow right-wing government formed by Shamir in June 1990.

Another-right wing veteran from a left-wing background was Rehavam Ze'evi. In 1987—before the Intifada—he began to advocate transfer as a solution to Palestinian aspirations in the Territories. Although he was barred from public platforms initially, the Israeli public gradually became enchanted by the simplicity of the idea. Asked in the same opinion poll cited above: "if a Palestinian state were established [in the Territories] would most Israeli Arabs be interested in joining?", some 71 per cent of the Jewish respondents answered "yes". But virtually the same fraction of Israeli Arabs answered "no". The wishful thinking of Israeli Jewish opinion in its belief that this complex problem could be solved by the exodus of Arabs was all too clear. Ze'evi's ideas fell on fertile ground.

Although Ze'evi won only two seats in the 1988 election with the slogan "Them or Us!", his real success was to force other parties on the right to address the subject. Thus Raful of Tsomet began to boast that he would be willing to deport a million people if there was trouble on the West Bank. Techiya rejected mass expulsions in 1988, yet its party chairman had commented two years earlier that a transfer of half a million Palestinians should be a precondition for peace negotiations.

While Likud opposed transfer, individual members made sympathetic noises. Although Techiya, Tsomet and Moledet collected only 6 per cent of the vote in 1988 and returned 7 members to the Knesset, observers have estimated that, if the hawkish wing of Likud is taken into account, the far right can count on the support of 25 per cent of the Israeli public—and this was a conservative estimate before Saddam's attacks on Tel Aviv.

No doubt, Mr Shamir needs Ze'evi's support to neutralise both western pressure for a future international conference and Labour Party proposals for a genuine dialogue with the Palestinians. But it may also signify Mr Shamir's long-buried ideological preferences. With the Peace camp demoralised and undermined by Arafat's solidarity with Iraq and popular bitterness at the missile attacks, what better time to take advantage of the situation and ensure a realignment within the right away from its centre? When Moledet was established, the ideologue of Lehi and doyen of the far right, Israel Eldad, was approached to run for the Knesset. He turned them down. Perhaps he understood that his old comrade- in-arms from the underground, Yitzhak Shamir, was more than a match for his troubled opponents.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Facts about farms

Colin Ward

Who, in their right minds, would take on the job of bringing a little sense to the Common Agricultural Policy? Ireland's former finance minister, Ray MacSharry, was bold enough to become EC Commissioner, and presents his plans this month to member governments. Our Agriculture Minister, John Gummer, responding to leaks, condemned them in advance. He told the Commons on 24 January that the proposals "enshrine for ever an entirely out-of-date small-farm system". He told the annual conference of the National Farmers' Union on 12 February that they would "turn our proud industry into a Europe of allotment holders", and the delegates cheered him. Back in the Commons on 14 February he said: "We opppose them, we hate them, we condemn them."

My experience of the dreadful Mr Gummer is that, whenever he is so vehement on *anything*, there must be something good to be said for what he hates. Sure enough, it *was* said in *Farmers Weekly* on 15 February by John H Smith, who farms 523 acres but agrees with the MacSharry plan. He observed that the small farmer "is not responsible for the present- day problems of over-production. Let all larger farmers be honest with themselves and admit we have brought this about through greed. If we do not help the small farmer soon it will be too late and the problems will still be here."

We all know the background. In the depression decades, farmers were almost as poor as their employees. After the war, guaranteed prices made them rich, farms got bigger and bigger, employing fewer and fewer people. Joining the EC accelerated the trend. Two thirds of subsidies went to the biggest farms. For sensible political and social reasons, other countries applied the rules differently. The *average* size in Britain is 163 acres. In Germany, it is 42, and in France 71. In Britain, the part-time farmer tends to be a businessman accumulating tax losses. In other countries, it is a family tradition to hold on to a patch of land, even though Johann or Giovanni has a job running the post office or driving a Eurolorry.

Faced with the usual food mountain in an overstuffed Europe, Commissioner MacSharry has a ten-point plan to reshape European policy. You and I perceive that nothing he can do will stop the distortion of the poor world's agriculture that fills your beefburger with Paraguayan cow-meat or *our* cattle with the crops that should have fed villages in Africa. MacSharry simply wants to cut prices, reduce quotas for produce that qualifies for subsidy, and offset the consequences for *small* farmers by direct income support.

We're all familiar with Major Major's father in Joseph Heller's novel *Catch 22*, who found that the more alfalfa he didn't grow, the bigger the payout from the federal government. In spite of the Reagan years, American farmers were just as much subsidised last year as European ones. MacSharry's sin is that he proposes to pass the cash to the small grower and producer instead of, as automatically in Britain, to the big businessman.

Britain has the biggest farms in Europe. Sir Simon Gourlay, the retiring NFU president, told the union's conference that ours were six times bigger than the average farm elsewhere in the EC. Mr Gummer, despite his faith in market forces, is prepared to tolerate the featherbedding of the rich and powerful. What drives him to extravagant denunciation is the idea that anyone else should share in the automatic payout.

Yet everyone's mental image of the future of agriculture, from old-style Conservatives to the Green movement, as well as that of academic speculators on the future of work (Pahl, Gershuny, Handy and Pym) is that of the small, mixed, family farm, where food production is one of several alternating ways of earning a living in post-industrial Britain, along with driving the school bus, building jobs, catering and cleaning in sheltered housing, and delivering fuel, veg and papers.

Maybe the list should include lighting the boiler in the parish church, too, so that the Minister of Agriculture can worship in comfort.

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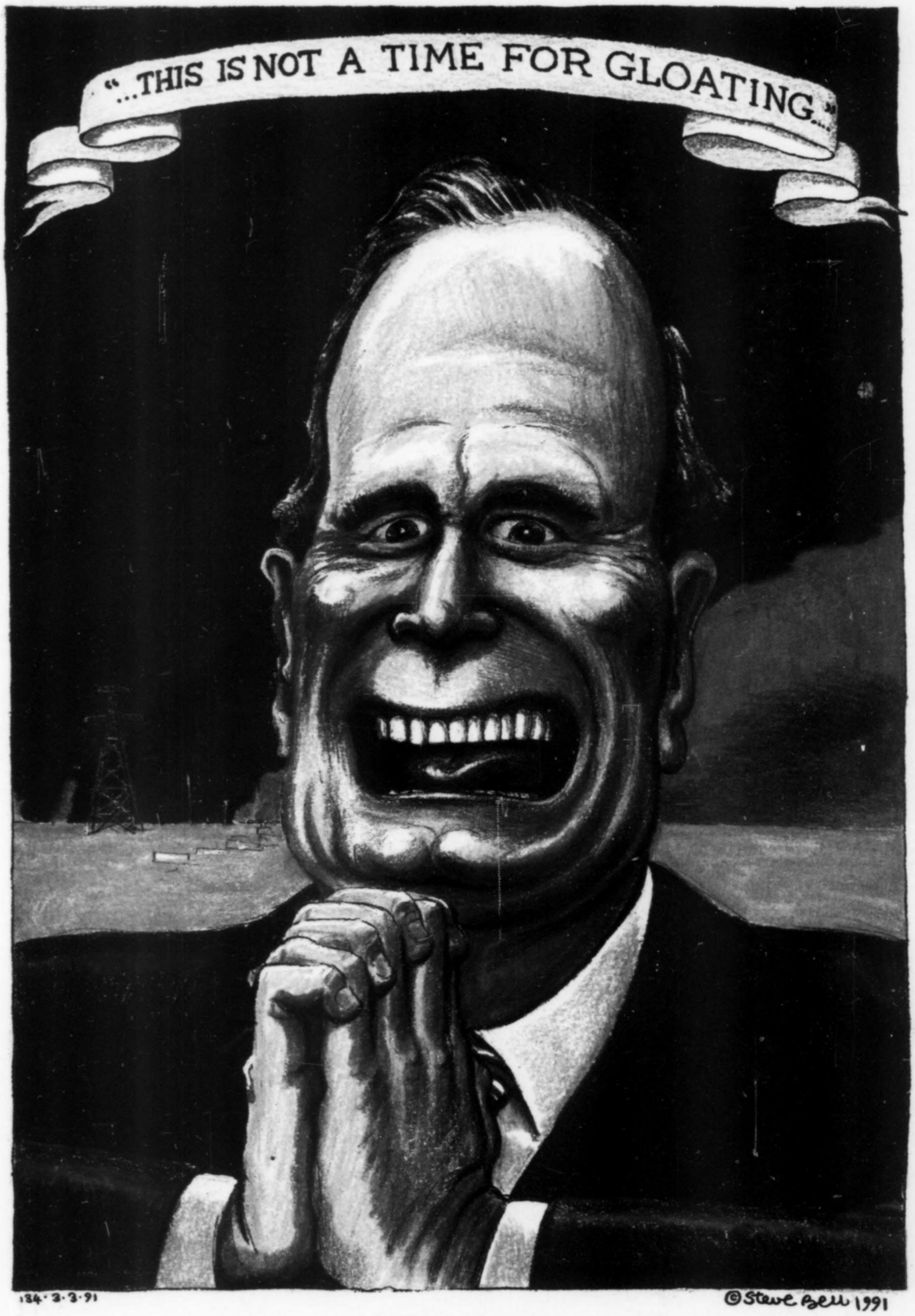
"...THIS IS NOT A TIME FOR GLOATING..."
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Read my apocalypse

After the war, the reckoning

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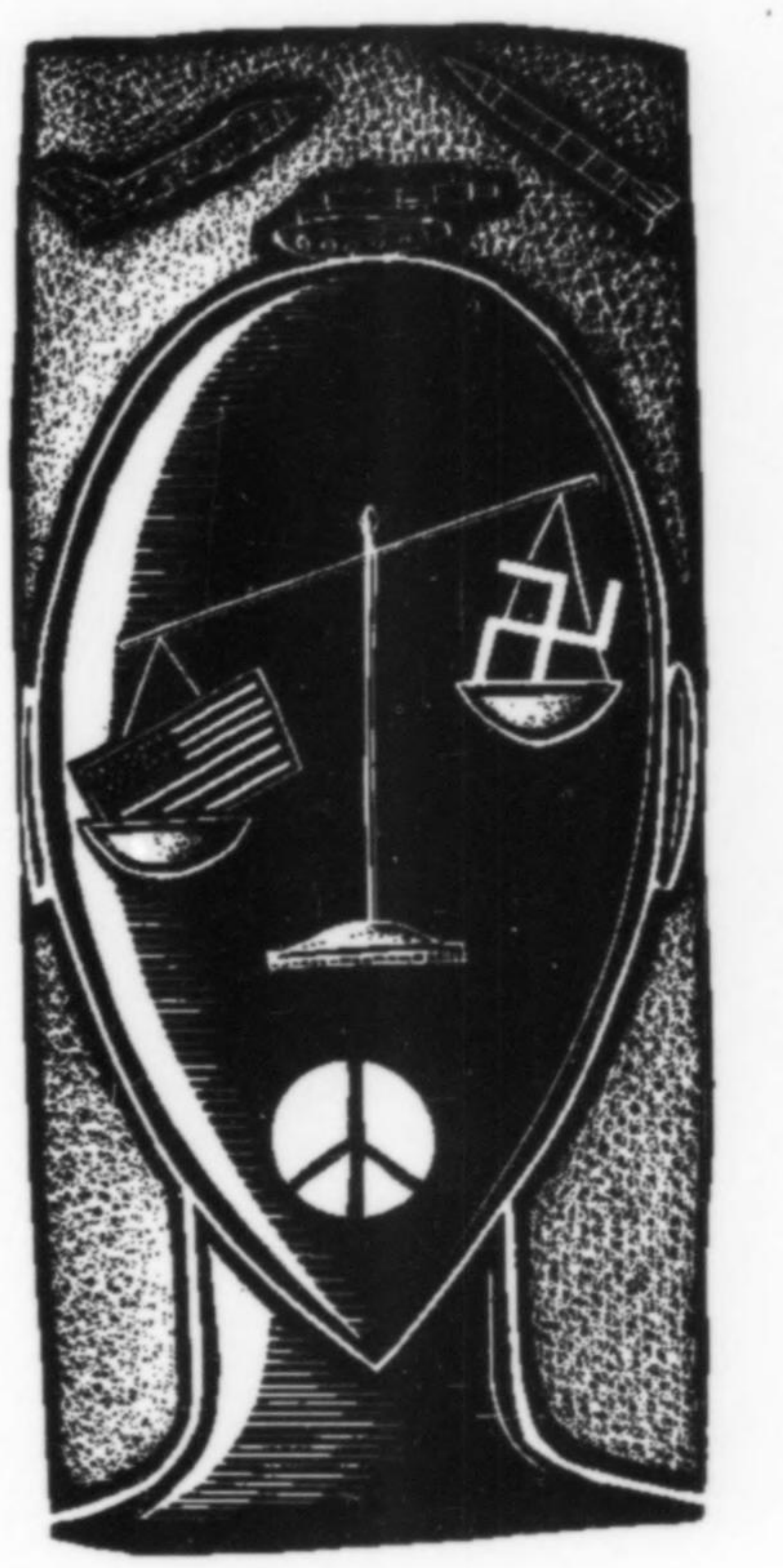

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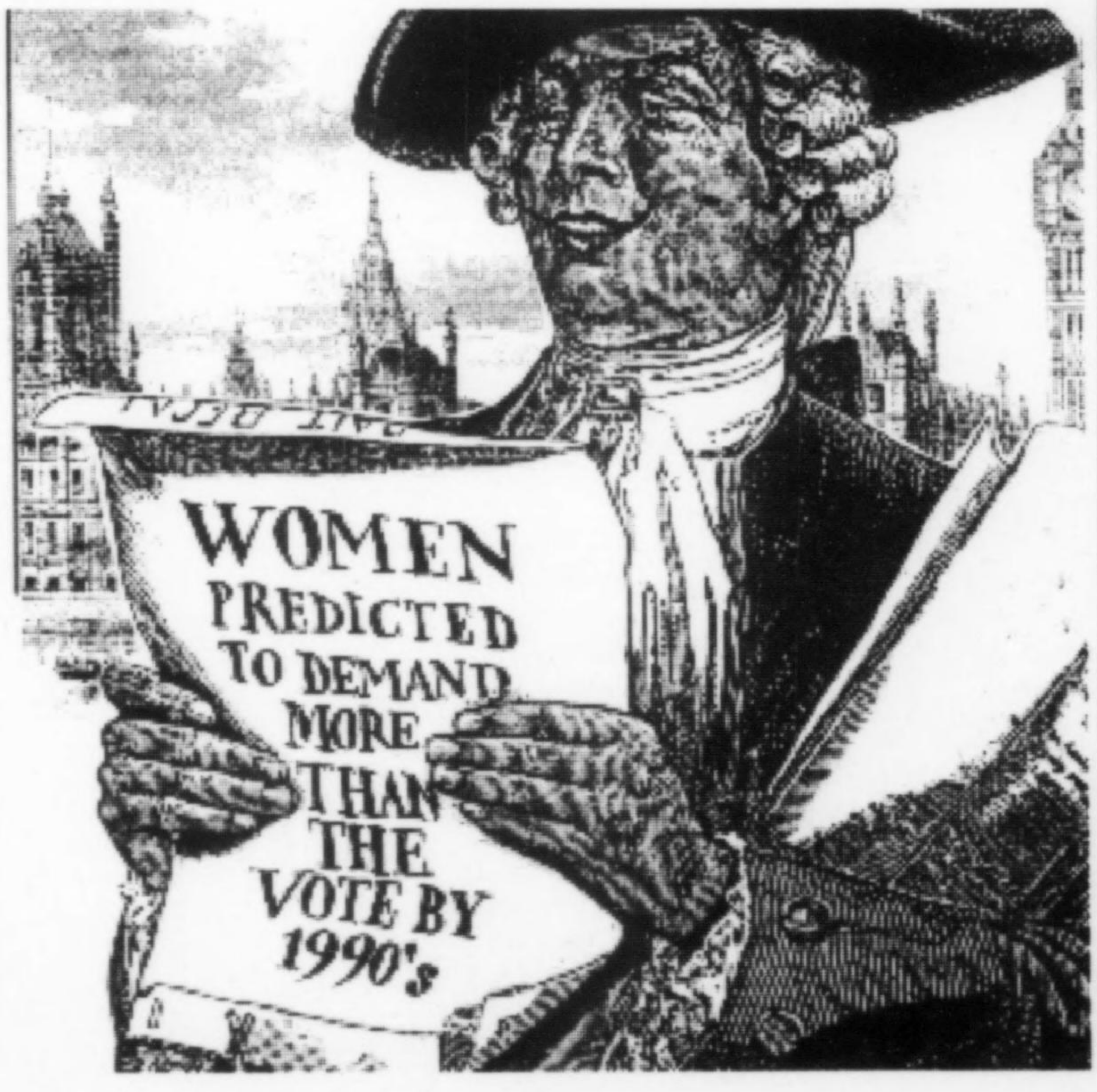

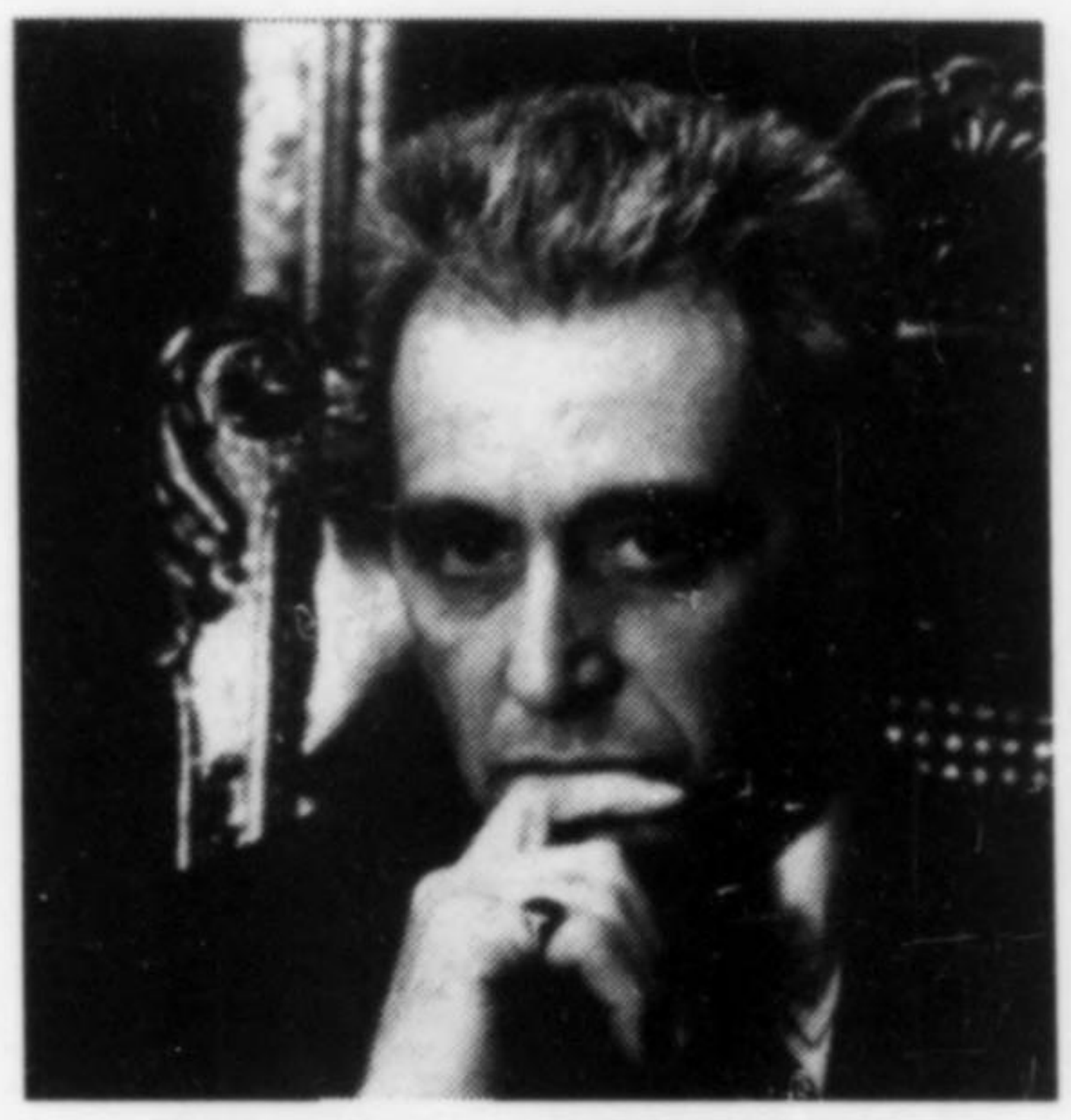

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part of the new movement. She took her man on the 1971 women's march in London. He joined in the chanting "What do we want? Freedom. When do we want it? Now" and drowned out the sisters. It was symbolic. They quarrelled about it and split up "directly because of my changing consciousness". She and her friends were also envious of lesbian feminists who did not have to think about "him" back home.

"They thought we had our feet in both camps and were therefore untrustworthy. And we felt untrustworthy."

What of the changes in women's lives? "Assumptions about women are what has changed most radically. And a woman's whole psychic energy isn't wrapped up in men or nurturing the male ego. Young women don't appreciate that vast liberation."

She also feels the Equal Pay Act and Sex Discrimination Act were the most tangible benefits. But they were circumvented, they never had the teeth to deliver fully. The Equal Opportunities Commission was never properly funded, remedies for discrimination were slight. Women's average hourly pay is still 68 per cent of men's. And then Thatcher came along to cut away women's increased independence, doing away with the maternity grant and freezing child benefit.

And what about men, the great feet-draggers in any cultural revolution? "Women can change, whatever their age (except Mother, that is), but leave men in peace for a minute and they set like cement and spend the rest of their lives repelling the faintest whiff of a new idea as if it were a bulldozer come to have a go at their foundations," intones Martha. A mellower Tweedie feels for men. "We are always laughing at men and it must stop." On a more prophetic note: "I have come to think that male sexuality is something very primitive, and that it is women who are the civilisers."

Tweedie is full of gentle reproach, tempered by pity for the twentysomethings. Too many of us know nothing about the history of our own sex. Confidence breeds individualism and the feeling you can do it on your own. But when today's hyper-confident, successful women find themselves with children and no proper child-care, they may finally get the point. But now it is down to us, says Tweedie. And we had better take up the gauntlet before post-feminist woman does any more damage.

women who could not be described as feminists, like Wanjari Maatti, the Kenyan who founded the Green Belt movement or Vandana Shiva one of the Indian women who set up their own bank.

Vanessa Redgrave, actor
Have women not got more urgent problems on their minds?

FRINGE BENEFITS

Gambling on futures

Colin Ward

It's a commonplace of pop sociology that some of us defer gratification, carefully planning for our own or our family's future, while at the opposite extreme, others spend from the moment the cash comes in.

In my parents' generation, the insurance man would come round with his book, still wearing his cycle clips, to pick up a shilling a week. Eventually the payout came, and the sum was quietly spent on a new coat with a knowing smile, ignoring the children's derision at the small gains that resulted from all that foresight. Inflation eroded providence.

Several other factors influence the generational shift. One, undoubtedly, is the fact we never mention nowadays: that after 1946 the British thought they had, through compulsory payments, insured themselves to cover such contingencies as sickness, unemployment, maternity, industrial injuries, family allowances, widowhood, retirement and even the cost of a funeral. This faith has been whittled away, even though you pay every week for the illusion of security.

Another is that the future is so unpredictable that none of us can take it on trust. If you think back a few years, you will agree that the issues that preoccupy you today were never dreamed of 20 years ago. Push the past back further and you find that even the papers you once read have either died or changed beyond recognition. Worse: it is quite likely to be *you* who has changed.

The famous final paragraph of Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* evoked the deep, deep sleep of England where the milk was on the doorstep and the *New Statesman* came out every Friday: and no doubt the idea of using current cash as a guarantee of immortality was behind the intriguing offer in these pages on 18 January of subscriptions "under which *New Statesman & Society* will be mailed to your home for the duration of your life". But, alas, this was followed by the rueful parenthesis "(or that of the magazine, whichever is the shorter!)".

My sympathy is with the 78-year-old reader who asked whether he could transfer his life subscription. No one in the office will tell me what discreet reply was given, but I was told that there is a steady trickle of applicants for lifetime subs.

But by far the boldest attempt to use current cash to guarantee future viability comes from the Trollope Society. This is a registered charity with the aim of republishing all of Anthony Trollope's novels at the rate of four a year between 1989 and the year 2000. Amazingly, this has never been done before. Literary enthusiasms cut across political allegiances, and for those affluent enough, the Trollope Society offers the most thought-provoking money-back guarantee ever.

If you send £975 you get four books annually for 12 years, post free, as well as an annual free book, a quarterly magazine, and so on. But the absorbingly interesting thing is that in October 2000, on despatch of the 48th book, the Trollope Society guarantees to pay back to you or your heirs, the entire amount of the original deposit.

I never think beyond next year, and I'm astounded by the faith in the continuity of everything that the Trollopians display. So I enquired about the rate of acceptances. They told me that they have more than 300, including two recent cabinet ministers and several QCs.

The Governor of the Bank of England, Robert Leigh-Pemberton, is due to propose the health of the society at its dinner on 25 March. I asked if he was among the 300. "He's a keen supporter," I was told "but buys the books on an annual basis. Perhaps he knows something about inflation that we don't!"

There is a hidden snag, purely a matter of psychology. A now dead friend once confided to me that he just had to live long enough to see the final volume of H C Robbins Landon's monumental study of Haydn. I foresee a high death rate among British worthies at the end of the year 2000. They will expire, like Anthony Trollope's Warden, with a peaceful smile on their lips, content with that handsome library and a little nest egg for a favourite grandchild.

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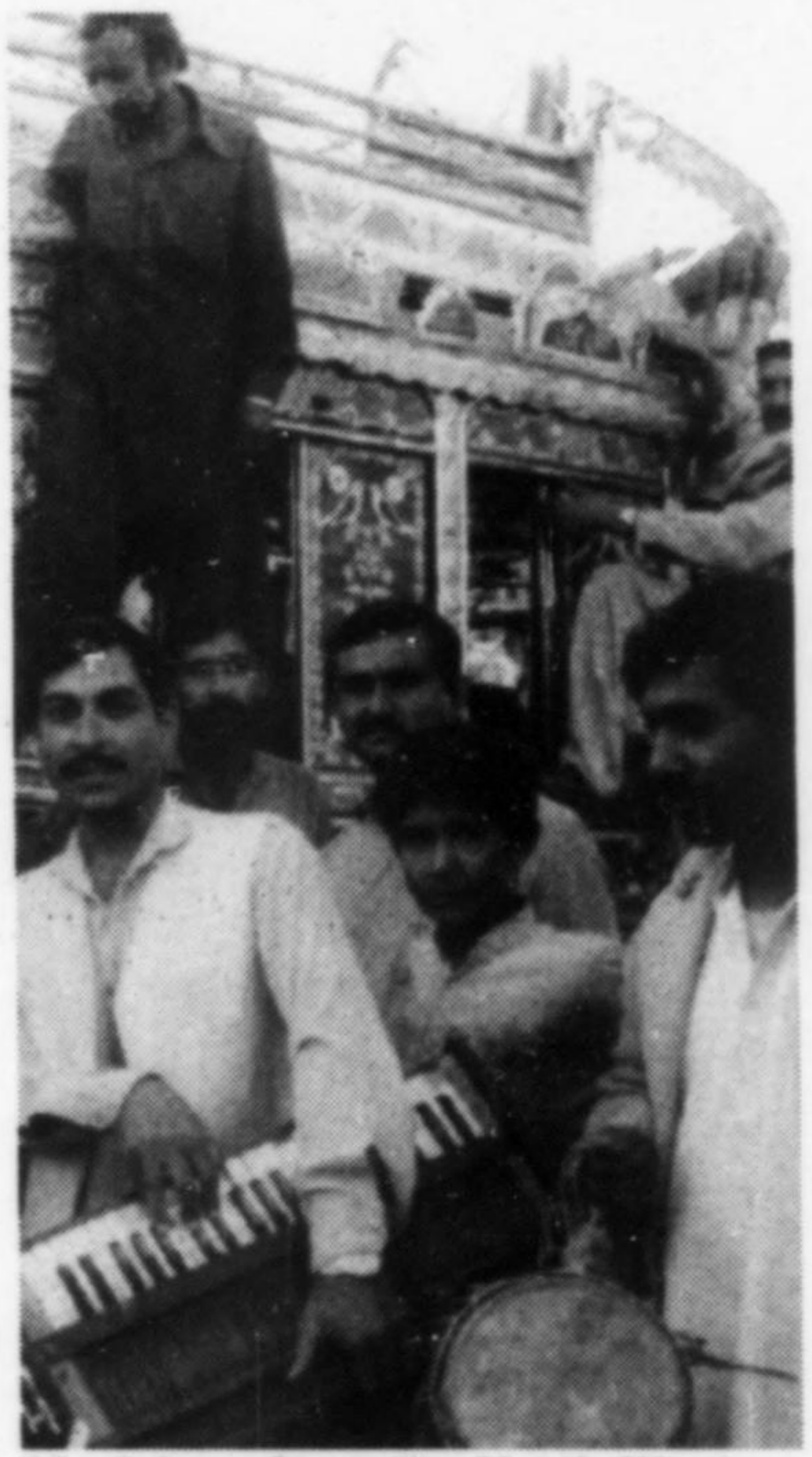

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A week after the massacre at El Zapote, Bush rewarded the Salvadorean army with three A-37 Dragonfly jets and six UH-1M helicopters. Presumably Colonel Leon Linares of the 4th military detachment felt empowered by this news, because, four days later, he detained a group of 18 journalists, six of them foreign reporters including the *Los Angeles Times* and CBS correspondents. They were returning from Morazan, where they had been covering the FMLN's return of Sam missiles to the Nicaraguan government. Colonel Linares told them: "If this happens again, you could all be dead."

The dispatch of military hardware more than makes up for aircraft downed in recent conflict with the FMLN, most notably the Huey UH-1 shot down in Lolotique on 2 January. For the US administration and the Salvadorean government, that incident came as manna from heaven. After the crash, two wounded US military advisers were shot by members of the guerrilla unit (on the FMLN's own admission), providing the justification for renewed aid.

Buttressed by this latest signal from Washington, the Salvadorean government displayed renewed intransigence at the February rounds of UN peace talks. Government representatives dismissed a UN proposal to set up a tribunal composed of participants from all sides that would have examined the records of all Salvadorean army officers. Instead, the Salvadorean government has reverted to its own previous proposal, the army would investigate itself. Thus the Bush administration continues to obstruct any move towards settlement and reconciliation.

While public revulsion turned on the revelations of Iraqi brutality in Kuwait, the media here remain consistently silent on the subject of repression in El Salvador. With the US government eager to focus attention on the "enemies" of the New World Order, the time is ripe for the Salvadorean military to try to decimate Salvadorean political opposition, particularly if gains are secured by the opposition despite fraud and repression. When the FMLN said it would observe a unilateral ceasefire during the elections, the Salvadorean army launched a major military offensive in FMLN territory, with attacks focused on civilian communities. On 12 January, the Maximiliano Hernandez death squad issued a communiqué calling for the "extermination" of all intellectual, religious and political leaders of the opposition. If the attack on *Diario Latino* was not a warning that the US government can bomb Iraq and simultaneously advance terror elsewhere, then this statement should be—as indeed are the more than 50,000 Salvadoreans murdered with US funds in the past ten years, victims of World Orders old and new.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Chunnel vision

Colin Ward

My father used to keep pound notes in the pages of a novel by Scott called *Peveril of the Peaks*. Asked why, he replied that it was the book anyone would be least likely to take off the shelf. But next to it was its runner-up, Sir Joseph Stamp's *Principles of Taxation*.

I rose to the implied challenge and read it as a child, believe it or not. And while I got nowhere with Scott, I retain a basic lesson from Stamp. A bad tax is *regressive* (it hits the poor hardest) and is expensive to collect. A good tax is *progressive* and cheap to collect.

Now I've steadily resisted the temptation to become a Poll Tax Bore. In the first place, everyone knows what I know, and in the second, it isn't for a committed anarchist to offer advice to politicians. You don't have to be a defender of the rating system to see that the community charge was simply a by-product of central government's vendetta against local authorities. The aim was to ensure that the Treasury is in absolute control of all public spending. The fact that it flouts all principles of taxation was, to the government, unimportant.

The Liberal Democrats' rejoinder was a local income tax, adopted in many other countries, which could be a cheap and simple local precept on the Inland Revenue. Personal mobility creates problems in American local taxes, easily solved in several of the Swiss cantons with formulae like "75 per cent to the commune where you live, 25 per cent to the one where you work". This proposal meets another vital principle of taxation: comprehensibility. But because the Liberal Democrats got there first, Labour has had to propose a series of bodged jobs, which neither its members nor the electorate understands. The Conservative response to the poll tax disaster is the eyewash of suggesting the removal of the most expensive council service, education, directly to Treasury funding.

There's an incredible short-term temporising about the whole debate. Our politicians act as though they are not merely ignorant of the principles of taxation, but they are ignorant of political philosophy too. It is already ten years since a leading article in the *Economist* remarked that British local government "has been swatted by Margaret Thatcher's cabinet like an irritating fly", and, in a comment that could have been made yesterday, that Mr Heseltine "like all his predecessors, entered office pledged to increase local freedom and has spent his time curtailing it".

Burke, Bagehot, and all the worthies trotted out for ideological respectability, would have been horrified. And so would our neighbours on the other side of the Chunnel. The Council of Europe has issued a study of *The impact of the completion of the internal market on local and regional autonomy*, which calls for the adoption in European Community law of its "Charter for Local Self-Government", to "formalise commitment to the principle that government functions should be carried out at the lowest level possible and only transferred to higher government by consent".

Now British governments will cheerfully implement EC regulations on vegetable seeds or ice-cream, the silly trivia of bureaucracy, but they will all choose to ignore this elementary principle. Some things are really sacred, like our grotesque British centralisation of everything.

Two years ago, the crime-writer Ruth Rendell and I wrote a polemical pamphlet in which we argued that, contrary to English myths, "the most centralised state in Europe, with a few obvious exceptions such as Romania and Albania, is the United Kingdom."

People nudged us at Christmas parties to say that we never anticipated what would happen in Romania, did we? But, however little that country has changed, what nobody takes on board is the fact that we were right about Britain. People form their world-view at the age when I read the *Principles of Taxation*, without noticing that Germany, Italy and even France, have changed beyond recognition in devolutionist measures. Here, the very last the Treasury will grant to any local body, whether regional or local, is the right to raise its own revenue, and run itself.

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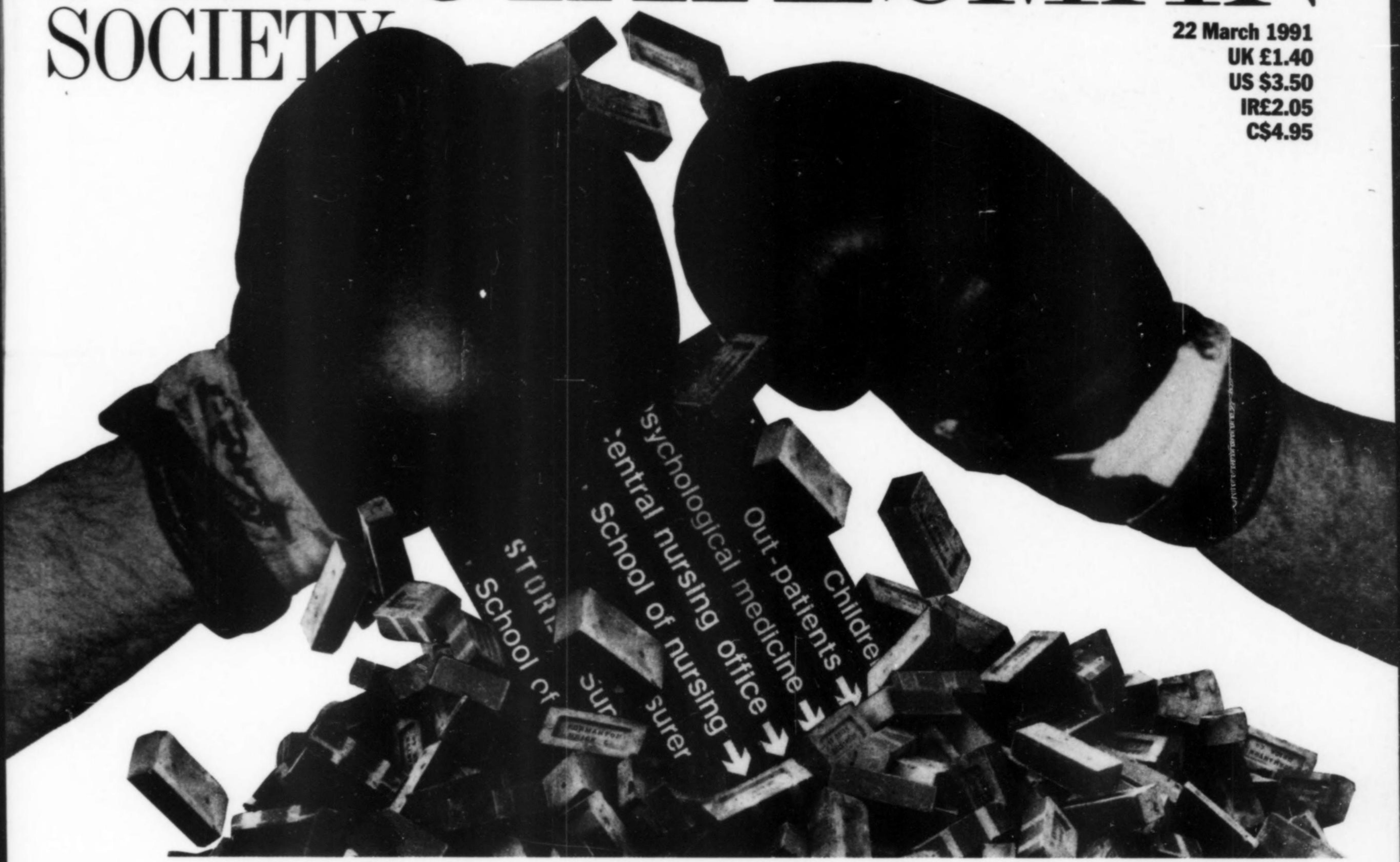
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of Court of Appeal judges, through lack of both intelligence and honesty, even to spell the word justice, never mind trying to dispense it. Here the royal commission is no help. It has no remit on judicial training, selection, appraisal or accountability.

Paddy Hill was right about the intellectual honesty of the Court of Appeal judges; for a century they have displayed a contempt for democratic legislation whenever it concerns their own procedures. The 1907 Criminal Appeal Act asked them to receive *any* evidence, new or old, if it was in the interests of justice to correct a miscarriage. They responded by virtually restricting its scope to mere points of law. The 1968 Criminal Appeal Act produced the concept of an "unsafe and unsatisfactory" verdict and gave the Home Secretary the right to force them to look again at miscarriages. Again, the judges refused to operate it as parliament intended.

The root of their intellectual dishonesty, however, is deeper and involves congenital racism in the very widest sense of that word. Faced with a gender issue, an Irish dimension or a class context, they reach for the comfortable, racial blanket of their white male clubbiness and draw the same white male clubbiness of the police into symbiotic alliance with them. In the Irish context, it is a racism that has been nurtured daily since 1974 by the Prevention of Terrorism Act and may defeat all the tinkering with systems that the royal commission engages in.

Their response to the Birmingham Six affair has been in character. Unlike the head of the Midland Bank, Lord Lane will not resign. With the judiciary, the buck stops nowhere. If there had been any propensity over the past decade to accept criticism and act on it, there would be no need for a royal commission. Instead, an alternative Court of Appeal has emerged. It consists of newspapers such as the *Independent* and the *Guardian*, authors such as Robert Kee and Chris Mullin, and TV companies such as Granada and Yorkshire. TV documentaries have had the advantage of being able to outspend the police campaign in the Murdoch and Rothermere tabloids to shore up the verdicts. The judges have retaliated with an attempt to destroy the BBC's *Rough Justice* and Lane's peevish refusal to let out the Birmingham Six.

If the royal commission sets up another tribunal to second guess the Court of Appeal, there is little doubt that the judiciary will try to disable it too. The only real solution is a sustained campaign for the re-education of the existing judiciary and an equal opportunities policy for the appointment of its future members; it is a more daunting social task than any of the economic problems that will face Britain in the 1990s.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Price of history

Colin Ward

The blow fell in 1986, when Suffolk Fire Authority refused to issue a public entertainment licence on the ground that Hadleigh Guildhall failed to meet safety standards.

Our local town was one of the centres of the wool and cloth trade in mediaeval England. So just behind the High Street it left a spectacular group of buildings, like a cathedral close. It has one of those vast 14th-century churches, the extravagant deanery tower, and the Guildhall—begun in 1250 and extended every century since.

The middle bit is the Market House of the 1430s, and, a few decades later, the five Hadleigh guilds added a magnificently roofed hall at the back. Then a west wing was tacked on, which became first a grammar school and then almshouses, as well as an east wing, later converted into an assembly room with a musicians' gallery.

Part of the building was set aside in 1574 to be a workhouse and house of correction for the "restreynt of ydle and evil disposed persons and roges". The Hadleigh Amateur Dramatic Society, who staged its shows there until the fire authority's ban, relishes the fact that, in the 16th century, its predecessors needed the consent of six of the "Chief Inhabitants" to put on anything and that, in 1594, "The Privy Council forbade the Whitsun plays and ordered the town officers to pluck down the stage".

In that century, ownership of this incremental accumulation of active citizenship has been vested in a trust called the Hadleigh Market Feoffment which also owned the Ram Inn opposite, and, as the Guildhall was slowly falling down, built a corn exchange next door in 1813 on the site of the old bull run. By 1850, feeling that a decent public hall was needed, they decided not to get rid of all that dereliction, but to add on a new town hall with a fire station on the ground floor. It was a red-brick Italianate building, making no concessions to antiquity, and they borrowed £840 to build it.

Then Hadleigh fell asleep, economically, for a century. The cloth trade was long forgotten, the silk industry collapsed in 1868, milling, rope-making and brewing, as well as the agricultural market, moved elsewhere. Population was static at about 3,000 for a hundredyears. As late as 1960, it was called "a dying town". This is the only reason why its ancient buildings still survive. The current boom-town and tourist image that has more than doubled the population is very recent.

The old local council was subsumed into Babergh District Council, leaving Hadleigh's town council, which has a mayor but little cash, to take over the buildings from the Market Feoffment Trust (unable to renovate its property when faced by the fire authority's ruling over safety).

Advice and criticism showered in. Babergh council agreed to meet half the cost of the original estimates, but these were overturned as structural defects were uncovered. English Heritage, advising the Department of the Environment, disapproved of the insertion of a lift in a Grade I listed building, while the mayor said that he couldn't support the plan if it did *not* include a lift for the elderly and disabled. To make the project viable, the town council resolved to move out of the old gas works into the more awkward rooms, only to find that this disqualified that part of the building from grand aid. Babergh council imposed 25 conditions on its promised support, and, meanwhile, the Hadleigh Community Association claimed that the town's needs would be more simply met by a new building somewhere else.

As the county fire officer goes to bed, knowing he has done his duty, the civic leaders have steered through endless stalemates and spent more than £600,000 on the first phase, opened on 1 March with a "glittering civic reception". The licensee of the Ram has acquired the franchise for the bar, and the owner of the restaurant, Upper Crust, has become resident caterer. A complex manager has been installed, and he explains that: "Our biggest problem was finding suitable furnishings for the function rooms to keep within the style."

The only lesson is that if a slice of history falls into your lap, you just have to accept that becoming the custodian of Our Heritage is not only time-consuming, but pricey.

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Britannia overruled

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Losing the arms trade war

Wynne Godley:
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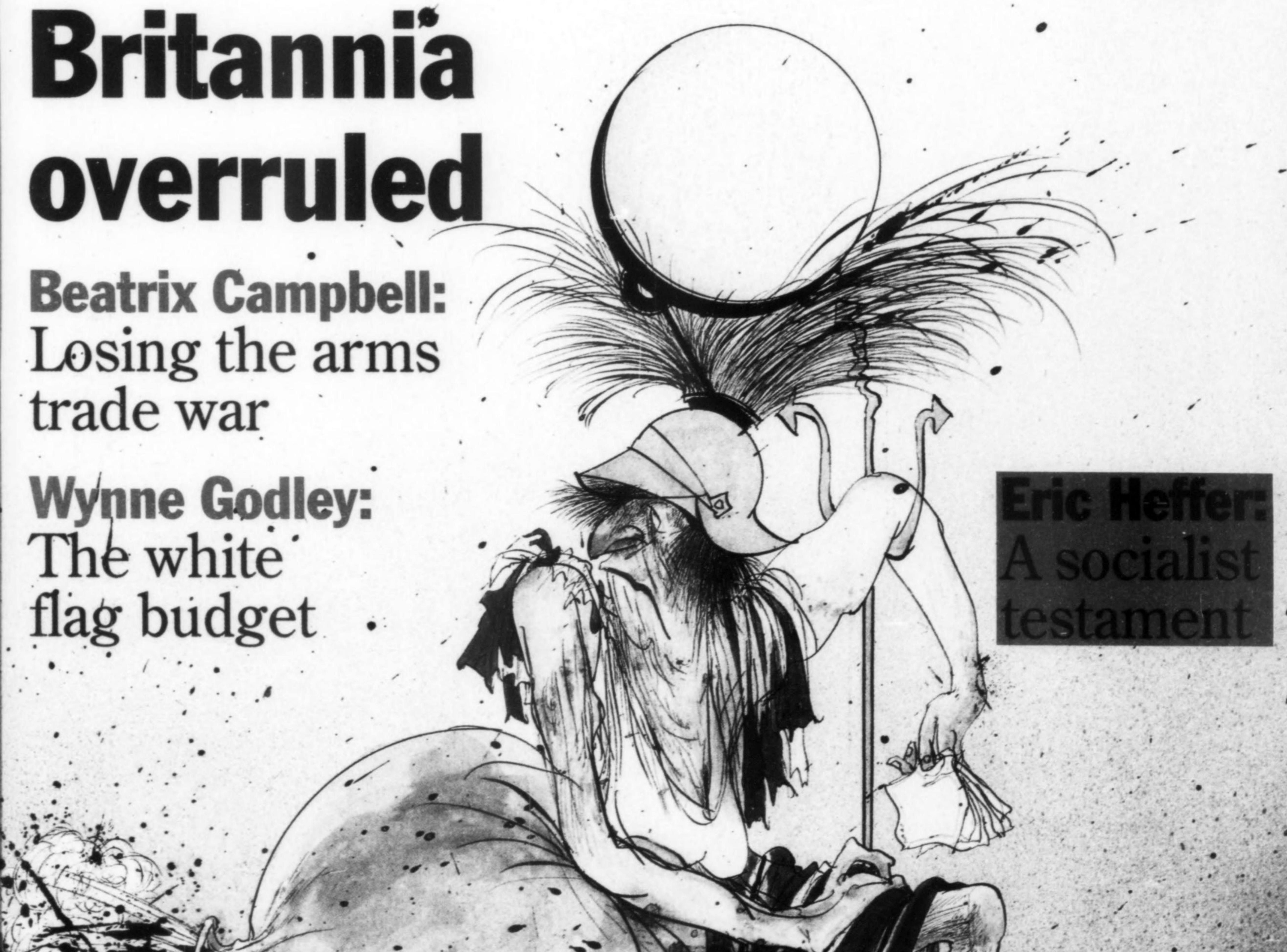

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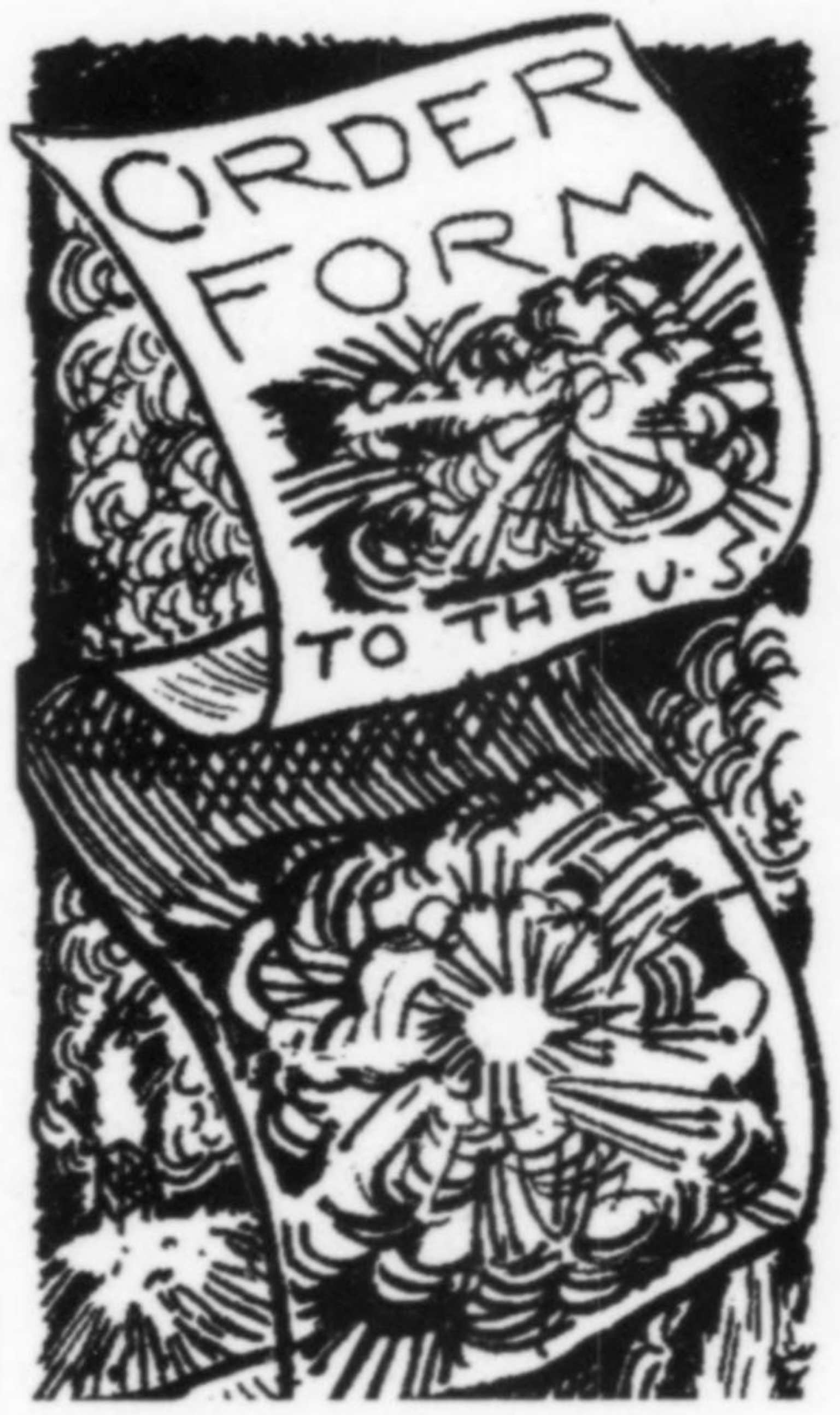

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Guardian of Contradiction: Susan Sontag

Photo here and on page 23 by Melanie Friend

On Christianity:

As I have grown older, my Christian views have strengthened. I was brought up an Anglican and played a full part in the Church, which I left after I became a member of the Communist Party. It was not until I had been a Labour MP for some years and had a religious experience in Israel (in 1967) that I went back to the Church, recognising in fact that I had never really left it.

Christian socialism had, in practice, been an essential part of my entire political life. The sermon on the mount, the Magnificat and much else in the Gospels are revolutionary. They are basically socialist in concept. I believe we must create God's Kingdom here "on earth as it is in Heaven". Like George Lansbury, I see no distinction between socialism and Christianity; the latter merely strengthens my views that socialism is essential.

the east, but throughout the world. Bureaucratic collective societies cannot be regarded as forms of socialism. We must start again.

In Latin America, it could well be that an essential part of socialism will be a mixture of Marxism and liberation theology. In Europe, we should work for a united socialist Europe, involving east European countries as well as those in the west. It should in no way be confined to the EC. The instrument that can be helpful is the Council of Europe, whose members can be drawn from all European countries. We need to work for peace by taking a firm stand against nuclear weapons, seeking forms of defence on a different basis, neither through a European defence system, nor aggressive so-called "traditional" weapons.

Fifty years in politics is a long time. I have witnessed progress and retreat. It cannot be denied that socialism is in crisis; it has been seriously weakened, both in the east and the west, and is in massive retreat. Much of the good that Labour did in 1945, and continued by the Tories in successive governments, has now been undermined and destroyed during Thatcher's years. It urgently needs to be rebuilt and improved upon.

But it is wrong to say that socialism is dead. It is well and truly alive, kicking and struggling, and in time, will renew and reassert itself. Why? Because as long as capitalism exists with its deep class divisions, socialism is bound to have a future. The very nature of capitalism lays the basis for socialism.

One must look ahead not only in Britain, but throughout Europe and the world. The situation arising out of the Gulf war will make that more difficult, but a new, genuinely socialist world can be built. It is our task as socialists not to lose faith but to get on with it.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Too good to last

Colin Ward

A reader took the trouble to write to me saying that my sympathy for the small farmer ("Facts about farms", 1 March) is misplaced. The problem with small farmers, he says, is that they all wish they were big farmers, doing the same things without the advantages of scale. If they want to survive, he goes on, they should move into the area where the businessman cannot compete: organic growing. Here demand exceeds supply, and the retailers have to import certified organic produce.

I think he is both right and wrong. Right to think that a demand exists, thanks to a general climate of opinion, and thanks to the fact that the commercial market—whether we think of potatoes, tomatoes, beans or apples—has substituted bulk and ease of production for flavour and delight in eating. But wrong to think that you can make a living as a grower. This is not the image that the optimistic green journals project.

The people I know who actually committed themselves to this kind of market-gardening are not unskilled enthusiasts. They are very experienced and serious people. Down the road from us is a veteran who supported two people on a 2-acre plot, and kept careful records of success, failure and income over 20 years. He did everything right. One of the first things he did was to plant an orchard and a grove of nut trees—even Christmas trees for a bit of seasonal cash. He kept free-range chickens, guinea-fowl and a few breeding ewes.

And he took care not to compete with the bulk market, growing what were then seen as exotic vegetables. On Fridays, he would take carefully packed cartons to the station 12 miles away, for a long-suffering London friend to deliver to a retail wholefood shop and to a network of bespoke customers, collecting in their orders for the next week.

From the recipients' point of view, it was too good to last. What killed it was a dramatic increase in carriage charges by BR, wanting to be rid of uneconomic small trade. He kept a round of local healthfood shops, and joined a group of growers sending produce to the London outlet by van. But, of course, a glut of sweetcorn or Marmonde tomatoes for one was a glut for all—priced accordingly. In vain, I urge him to put his experience on paper. He's too busy, and simply claims that organic growing *is* viable, provided that you have a source of *real* money from elsewhere.

Clive and Fiona have had a similar experience. They, too, are experienced growers, and finally got hold of two acres and brought it into the approved condition. They think that their peak year for success was two years ago. Clive has since reverted to furniture-making, just to earn some money, and Fiona has started a teacher-training course in order to have a saleable skill. They aren't dismayed, and are trying to get the use of part of another field.

But *we* are dismayed by the tale of Pete and Sarah. They live round the corner and have the huge advantage that their house and four acres belong to his family's farm. They gained the Soil Association symbol for their produce four years ago, and sell a big range of fruit and veg from a stall down the lane, drawing customers from far afield. Interviewed in *Organic Gardening* last November, Pete said: "If we had to pay a mortgage, it would be impossible to make ends meet. As it is, we make a reasonable living from the holding because virtually the only energy input is ours and we don't put a cost on that. I don't think any organic smallholding can make enough money to pay a mortgage *and* provide a living."

It was a great grief to read a notice on the stall last month to say that it was closing. He's reverting to doing building work, and she's going to train for something that actually brings in an income. It's a nuisance for us, as eager consumers. But it's a tragedy for all these people who invested their energy and experience in the hope that the output would enable us to be not just fed, but well fed, and also give them a livelihood. Meanwhile, in the Co-op and the Gateway Superstore, as well as at the market in our nearest town, we can buy carrots packed in Florida and spring onions packed in Mexico.

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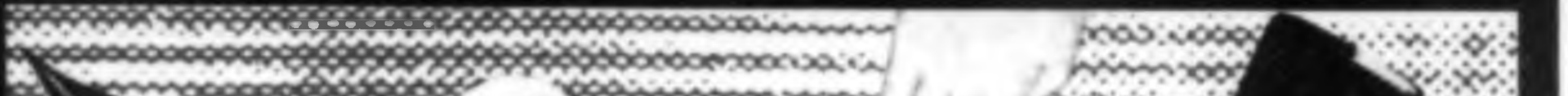
‘The west is not aware of what a danger the Soviet Union poses... If civil war here is unavoidable, it will involve nuclear arms. Yes, we shall perish, but we shall take the whole world to the grave’

Victor Alksnis, the ‘black colonel’, interviewed



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Victoria Brittain:
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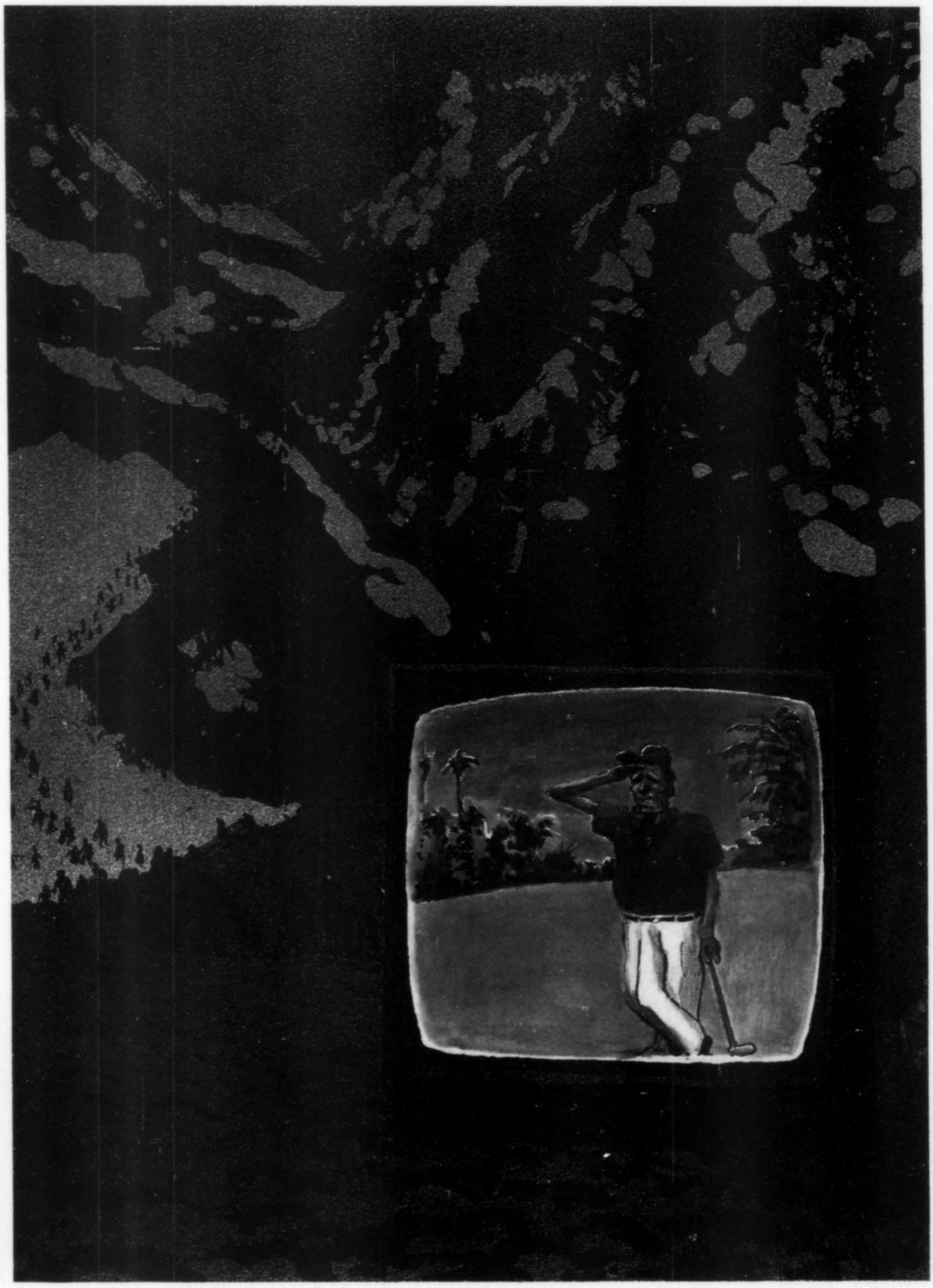
Graham Greene
and the New Statesman



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John Pilger on the victims of imperialism

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reawakening. Even within intellectual circles, discussion of the Romanian holocaust is taboo. Among members of the democracy-minded student movement, the 1930s are seen as a viable model for democracy and Antonescu as a "great patriot", trapped between the Germans and the Soviet Union during the war. "It's said that Jews and gypsies were killed," says Sorin Dragan, editor of the now-defunct Student League newspaper. "I don't know, but I still adhere to the movement's ideals." In fact, as Hannah Arendt wrote in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, so extreme were Antonescu's racial policies that even Hitler in August 1941, weeks after the Final Solution plans were approved, expressed his shock to Goebbels "that Antonescu is going ahead in this question much more radically than we have been".

The ruling Front for National Salvation has joined the chorus. In all of Europe, only in Romania and Bulgaria, writes the Front organ *Azi* (Today), were the Jews spared the gas chambers. "In Romania, where the people never ascribed to anti-Semitism and the government never succumbed to fascist pressure, 'Final Solution' plans were never implemented."

Strong ultra-right nationalist movements have capitalised on the country's political vacuum and lack of democratic traditions. In its vision of a "radically pure, Greater Romania," writes one sympathiser in the independent weekly *Zig Zag*, "is a Greater Romania, cleansed of gypsies, Jews and other enemies". In its top ranks, disempowered former Securitate, nationalist pseudo-intellectuals and old fascists have forged an unholy alliance.

The hate campaign against the Roma has climaxed in violence more than once since the revolution. Last February, Transylvanian peasants set fire to the Roma quarter in Rhegin, driving dozens of families to the local graveyard for shelter. Since then, pogroms across the country have targeted the Roma almost monthly, with no rebuke from the state officials.

The most brutal attack to date came in the eastern village of Mihail Koainiceanu. More than 1,000 Romanians marched on the Roma settlement there, burning it to the ground. The mayor told western reporters that the Roma had been rampaging unrestrained through the village. "Everyone was afraid. The police did nothing and people spontaneously took the law into their own hands." The regional authorities responded with 25 police officers to reinforce the three-man squad.

Since political persecution supposedly no longer exists in democratic eastern Europe, the Roma are denied political asylum in the west. Borders shut, the economy in ruins and nationalism at fever pitch, historical parallels to the fascist years come easily. "All Roma remember the days of the deportations," says Gheorghe. For the Roma, the years of the Ceausescu dictatorship are quickly becoming a nostalgic past.

FRINGE BENEFITS

God-wottery

Colin Ward

A favourite Victorian poem, much anthologised, included the unfortunately unforgettable line: "A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot!" The landscape architect Peter Shepheard has a variant on this phrase. Looking at the fussy street-furniture, geraniums in raised "planters" and multicoloured rustic concrete dwarf walls that accompanied municipal improvements, he would exclaim: "God-wottery, what pottery!"

The issue has suddenly arisen in Sudbury, in Suffolk. It used to be a tough little manufacturing town where everything radiated from the wide Market Hill, with its ancient churches, modest town hall and a statue of its most famous son, Thomas Gainsborough. A century ago, the "generous disposed public" could buy penny tickets to enable "the little hungry ones" to have a basin of soup and a slice of bread, to be eaten on Wednesdays and Saturdays at the kitchen in Market Hill. Today, they can buy barbecued chicken, samosas and anything else at the market stalls. The homeless young are out of town, camped by the riverside, but driven back into the centre by February's snow.

The district council has resolved, like half the towns of Europe, to pedestrianise Market Hill, and is trying to overcome the objections about delivery problems. Its consultation document explains that: "The traffic order for phase I of the pedestrian priority will have to provide for the access of service vehicles to the fronts of the properties. It would be preferable to avoid this by achieving good rear service. This can be done by . . . " And so on.

I automatically support measures to keep cars out of towns, but the issue has been clouded by God-wottery. The efforts to sell the proposal to the citizens through landscaping have rebounded. One of them argues that: "Sudbury is, or was, a typical old market town with its centre alive and bustling with activity. Now we are to have a 'pretty' paved area, totally out of keeping with the general environment." Another complains that: "I think it is rubbing the noses of the hard-up taxpayers in the tinted brick paving to recommend such a scheme, which will cost over £1 million in total, subject to inflation."

Conscious of the God Wot Factor, he observes that: "The dainty pink and beige paving bricks, zigzag hedging and general appearance make 'twee' seem an understatement. Sudbury is an old, bare, Suffolk town, not a pretty seaside resort prostituting itself to entice tourists to pause." I'm certain that he's right. There are fashions in hard landscape, as in everything else, and I went in search of this Mr Grouser in our local Toytown, who perceives that there is a whole industry selling the stuff. "Every time," he said, "that one bunch of docile councillors accepts a prettification scheme in one part of Britain, it adds to the portfolio that the consultants can flash to laggards to make them feel behind the times or unfashionable."

It's true abroad too. A recent survey of traffic-calming in Europe by Tim Pharoah and John Russell gathered the complaint that: "The intensive use of coloured paving, frequent visual blocks, different textures and a plethora of street-furniture is often too fussy and destructive of traditional street character." Mr Grouser rightly asks: "Why not just level up the road and see how it works?"

Looking back last year on his 1960s report, Sir Colin Buchanan, our most famous authority on *Traffic in Towns*, remarked that: "We should have known better, for the truth is that the public mind is so besotted with the motor vehicle that it is quite prepared to trade off environment for possession and use of motor vehicles." This, and not the expensive God-wottery, is the key issue, and it's very sad that the brick and tile industry should have managed to divert the local public's attention.

But, in an off-the-cuff interview in the 1970s about what should be done, Buchanan, foreshadowing Mr Grouser, remarked that residents should "sandbag a few streets and see what happens!" If it's a disaster, they'll have to think out why—and we won't need all that fancy pottery. If it's a success, we'll all congratulate them—and learn how to bring the advantages of pedestrianisation to Market Hill, without the dated urban hardware. God wot!

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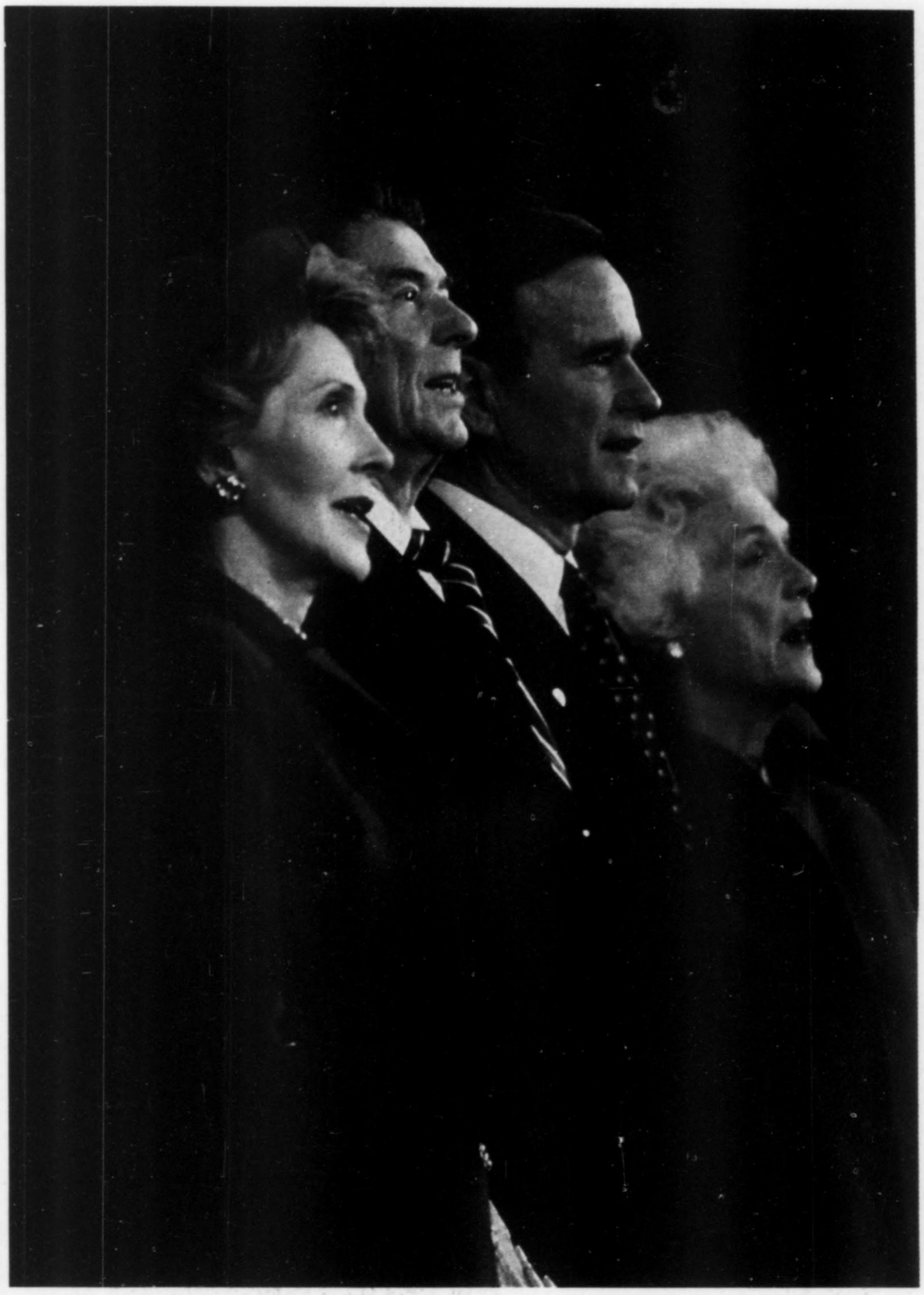
The neo-Nazis stir in Poland

Last rights for foetuses?

The vicar and his cremation services



Falling from grace

The press, the public and the presidency

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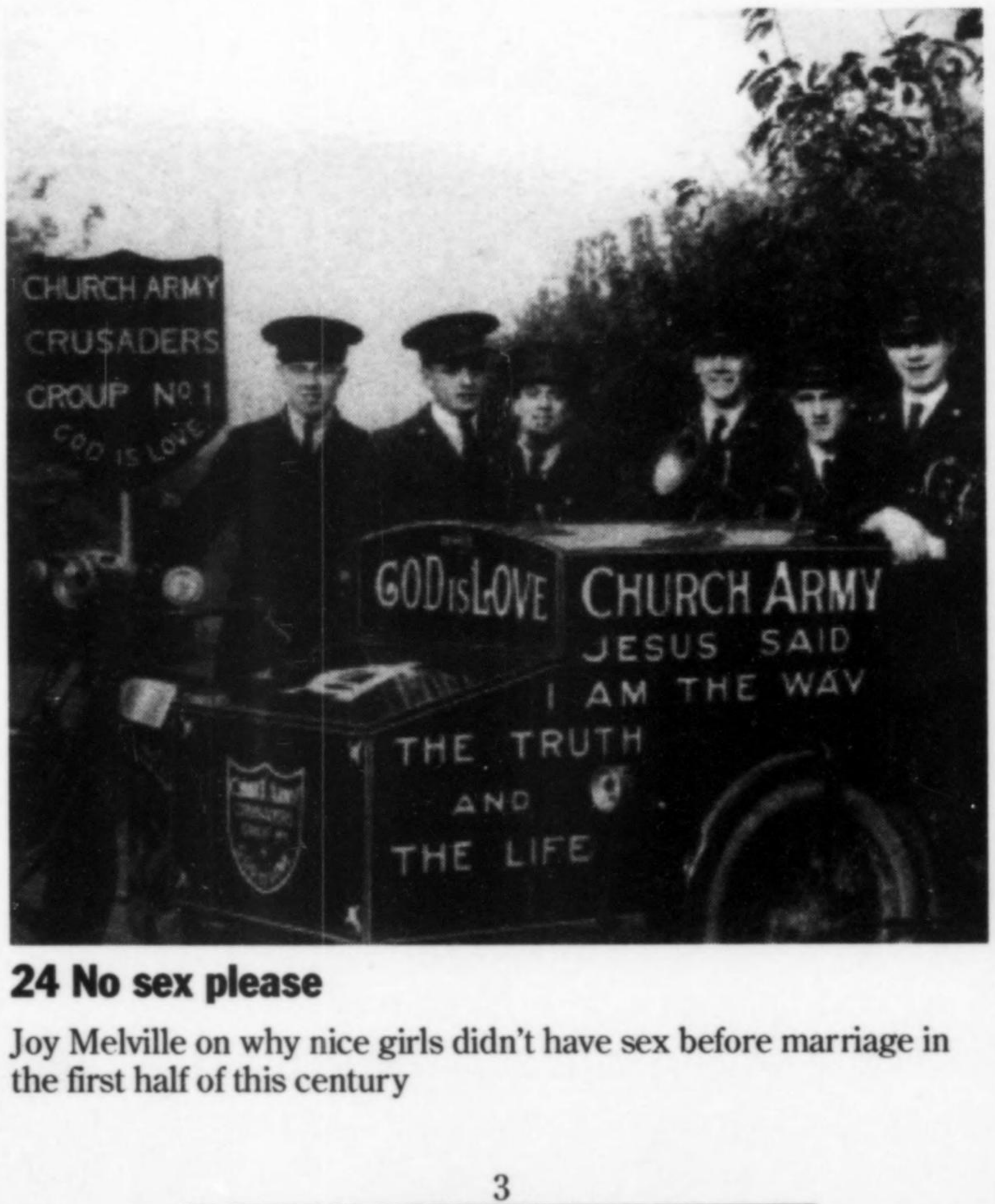

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Plus: new crime fiction; the history of surgery; Latin-American voices

remedies: "You'd try hot mustard baths, gin and nutmeg, jumping off the top of the wardrobe, lifting over-heavy things, drinking slippery elm." For the despairing, there were the back-street abortionists, who killed as much as they cured.

So courtship was muted. "You never saw young people like you do today with their arms round one another and kissing in public," said Jean Field, born in 1912 in Grimsby. "It was a very private business. At Grimsby, there were rows of terraced houses and about every half a dozen there was a passage which led to the back way. The firebacks backed on to these passages and so it was very warm. In winter, couples would go and stand there and just make love for hours without sex taking place."

Couples would often stay engaged for years: too penniless to marry. "They wouldn't let you rent a house if you were going to live together and not get married," said one woman. "And parents wouldn't let you have any privacy at home: they'd never go out and leave you together."

Even out in the street, some failed to get their privacy. Loitering young people found themselves the target of any group militantly intent on preventing sex. Members of the National Vigilance Association, for example, mapped out "moral danger zones" in many towns and cities.

> *Your ultimate aim was to get to Blackpool, so you could have it off. It was like a rabbit farm under the pier*

These zones were areas (such as the docks, for instance) where it was considered that young people might be lured into sexual relationships. Street rescuers worked hard to save them. Girls they thought at risk were hurriedly referred to rescue homes or "preventive clubs" where moral workers "saved" them. Early policewomen joined in the hunt, spending much of their time preventing immoral behaviour in parks and public places.

After the second world war, moral pressure groups like the Social Purity and Hygiene Movement disappeared. By then they were outdated. The sexually sophisticated postwar young ignored them. For half a century, these groups had fought to preserve the moral fibre of the nation, but in doing so, they wrecked the lives of many a young person.

The first of six programmes on "A Secret World of Sex: the British experience 1900-1950", "Forbidden Fruit", begins on Tuesday 23 April at 9.50pm on BBC2

FRINGE BENEFITS

Greener than thou

Colin Ward

So Jonathon Porritt chose to use someone else's party platform to give the Green Party a year's ultimatum: that, unless it changed its ways, he'd move on. You can sense the pent-up ire in his feeling that the party was "infested with fantasists who make the Tower of Babel seem a model of reason"; that his old chums lacked the organisational ability to walk a dog; and had a "wholly irrational abhorrence of political leadership".

Very rationally, I share this abhorrence, and I'm one of those who argued with valued green friends that an Ecology Party, as it was then, was a bad idea. Greenery was a social movement that had to permeate everywhere. It should have its pockets of infestation in every party of right, left and centre, but its real task was that of changing attitudes. Politics, as always, would come limping after reality.

But, leaving aside Porritt's frustrations, there *are* a number of deep divides in the green world, which its slowly growing influence is going to widen. One is like the age-old divide among Christians, between personal salvation and social action. I'm reminded of what must have been the last interview with Henry Miller in the prologue to the film *Reds*: "All these busy people changing the world," he drawled, "they couldn't even change themselves."

On the other hand, I can't help feeling that it trivialises big social issues to reduce them to personal behaviour. The issue came to a head with what Porritt called a "devastating paper" from Murray Bookchin at the National Gathering of US Greens a few years ago. Bookchin talked about "Social Ecology versus Deep Ecology" (his paper is printed in *The Raven* no 3, £2.50 from Freedom Press), and his thoughts are really worth pondering:

"Deep Ecology has parachuted into our midst from the sun-belt's bizarre mix of Hollywood and Disneyland, reborn Christianity, spiced with homilies from Taoism, Buddhism, spirituality. Social Ecology draws its inspiration from radical decentralisation thinkers like Peter Kropotkin, William Morris, Paul Goodman, among many others, who have advanced a serious challenge to our present society with its vast, hierarchical, sexist, class-ruled, statist apparatus and militaristic history."

On the other hand, Bookchin claimed, Deep Ecology has virtually no real sense that our ecological problems have their roots in social problems. "It preaches a gospel of original sin that accurses a vague species called Humanity, as though people of colour are equatable with whites, women with men, the third world with the first, the poor with the rich, the exploited with their exploiters."

Porritt (in his recent book on *The Coming of the Greens*) dismissed Bookchin's views as "an old-fashioned hatred of anything supernatural". I, on the other hand, found in them a welcome dose of that wise social and political realism that Porritt told the Liberal Democrats, of all people, that he couldn't discover in his own party. Both aspects of the green dilemma are illustrated in a deliciously infuriating new book by Charles Hoult.

Living Green (Green Books, £5.95) describes his cycle tour around Britain last summer, barging in on green people and enterprises. He found plenty of them making an eco-trip out of their ego-trip.

But all round the country Hoult met people who, far from lacking the organisational ability to walk the dog, had achieved the impossible, like the Suma Wholefood Co-op in Halifax with its £7 million-a-year distribution business, or the Ecology Building Society with its £6 million of assets, rooted in the ideals that the building society movement has abandoned, or the Centre for Alternative Technology at Machynlleth. Hoult's perceptive snapshots show that these busy folk don't stop to search their souls to find if they are Deep Greens or Social Greens. They make every kind of compromise with reality. They also make nonsense of the entrepreneurial heroes of the eighties, going into liquidation every week, and of the party-minded caucuses who want to round up everyone to support their current agenda.

The German greens and the Eurogreens were thrilled to win seats and be courted by the party fixers. And what happened to *them*?

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SOCIETY

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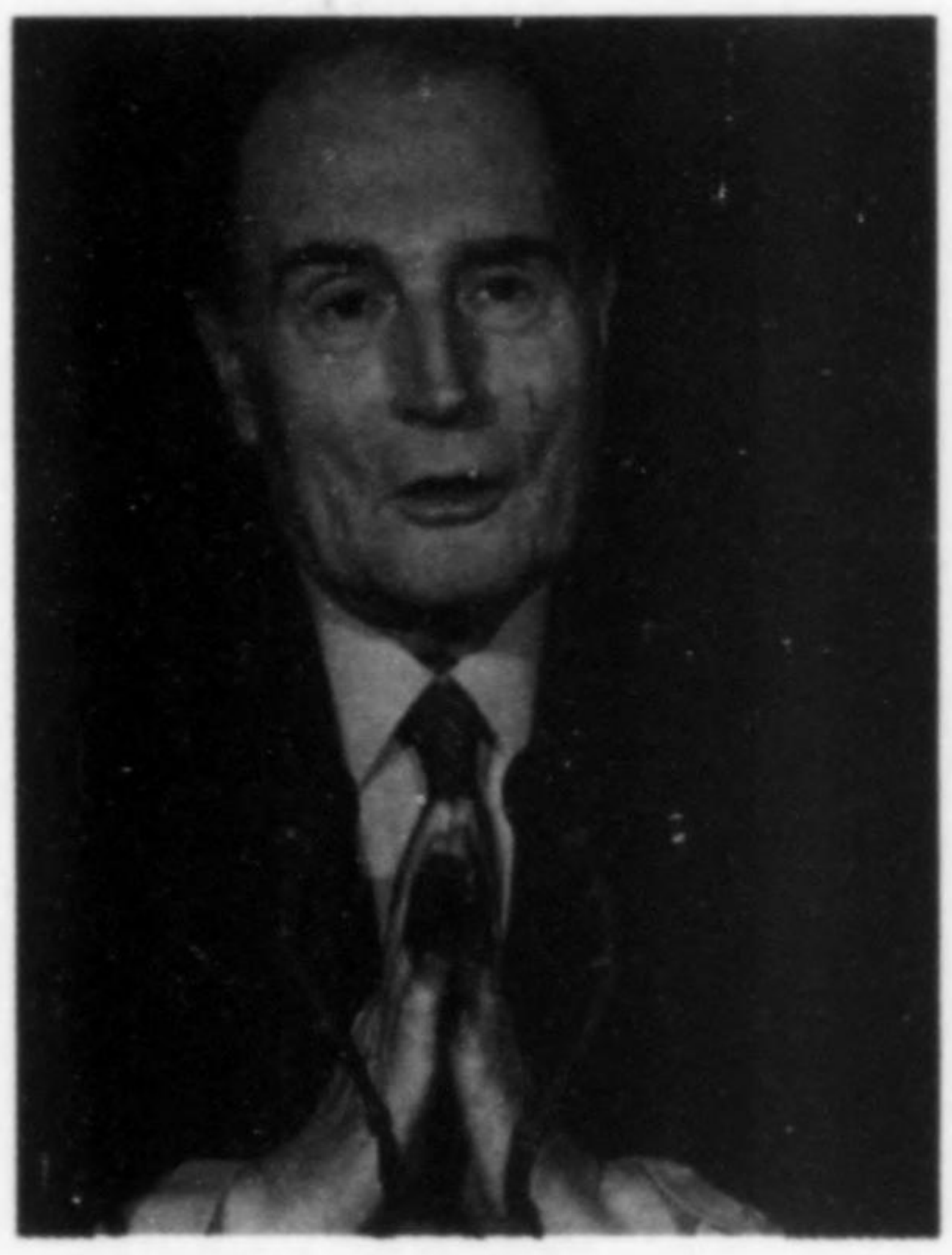
A safe haven for Pol Pot?

Helping Asia's Hitler back to power



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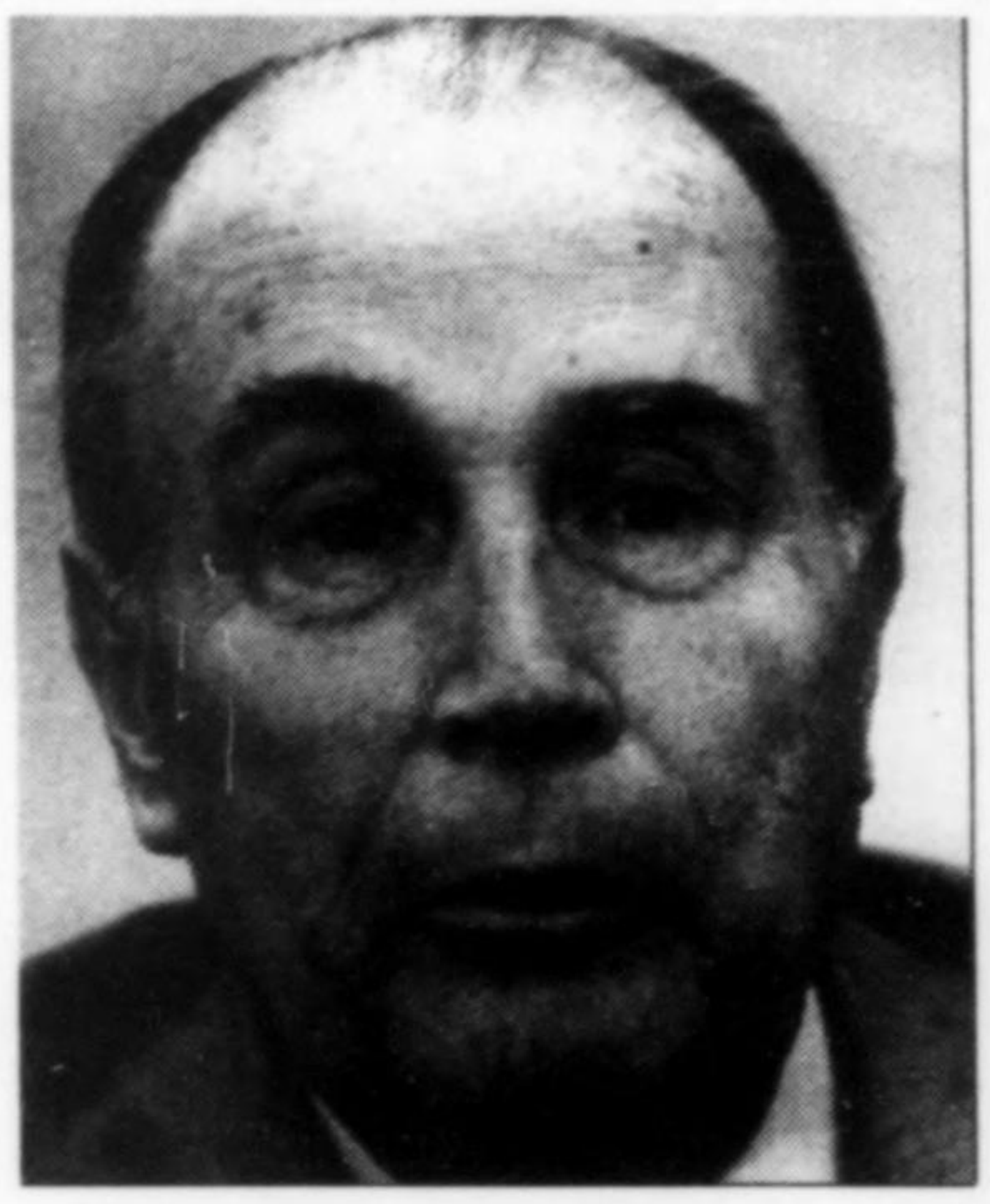

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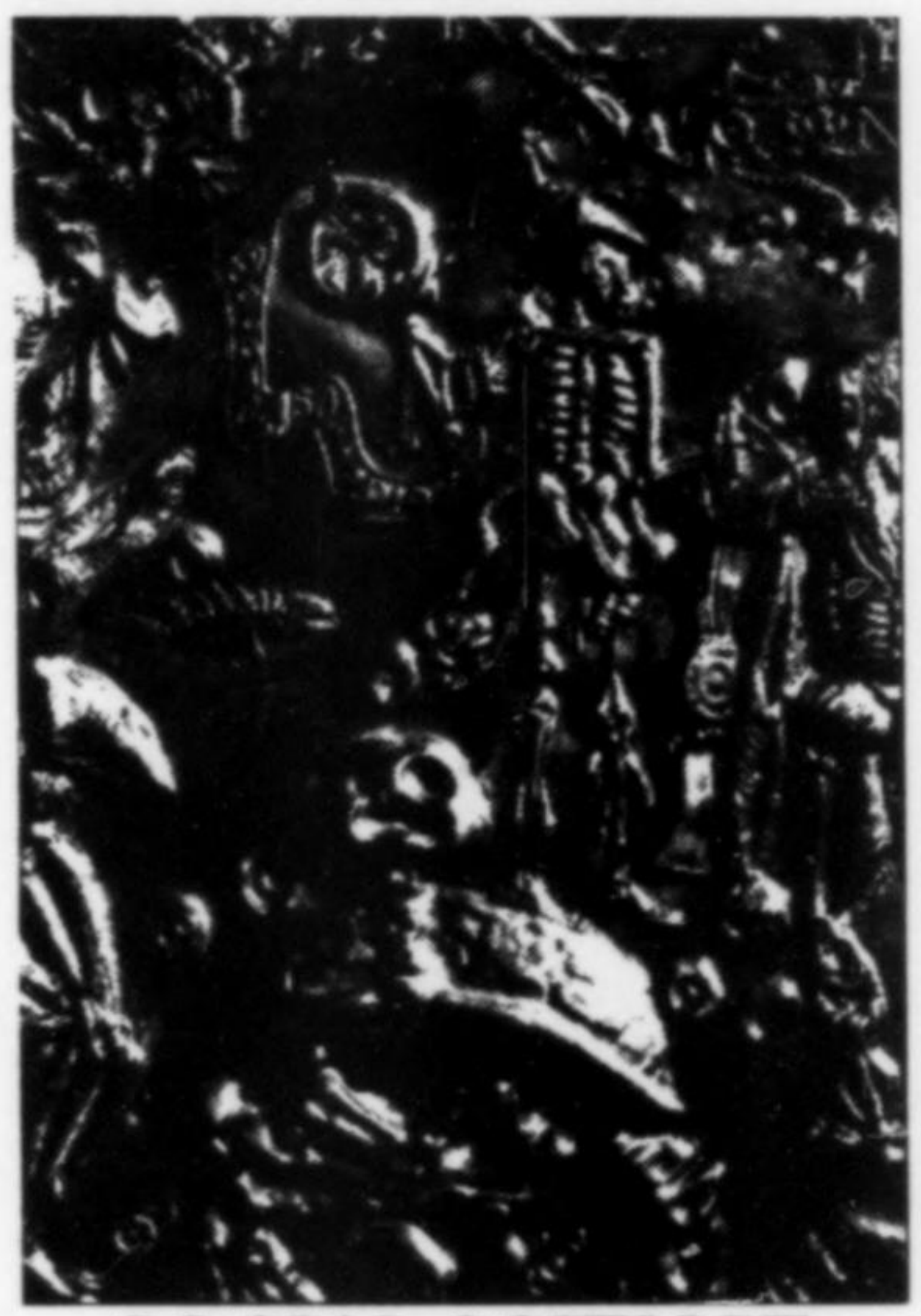

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Man's estate: Lynne Segal on a blinkered view of masculinity
Aids: Jeffrey Weeks prefers self-help to Papal blessings in the books that record ten years of crisis
Last lines: Stephen Howe on the failure of post-modernism
Plus: the history of education; greening public health

Non-human animals cannot conceive or make such a claim, and to insist the terms are parallel is profoundly offensive, the lazy thinking of a privileged group.

Indeed, it is sometimes hard to avoid the impression that, for some among the animal rights movement, non-human animals take precedence over humans. The movement's absolutism and its seeming openness to members of extreme right-wing groups, reinforce the view that, for many of its activists, there is no automatic relationship between a concern for animal rights and one for human rights. Among others, there is an air of sanctimonious hypocrisy. They may, if they wish, refuse insulin if they are diabetic, L-dopa if they have Parkinsonism, antibiotics or surgical procedures that have been validated on animals before being used with humans—but I deny them any right to impose their personal morality on the rest of suffering humanity.

Nonetheless, it is essential to listen to the message that the movement carries. Its strength, despite its inchoate ideology, is, I believe, in part a response to the arrogant claim to the domination of nature that western scientific culture drew from its scriptural roots. The animal rights movement is part of a widespread romantic reaction to the seemingly cold rationality of science. Scientists who ignore the strength of this reaction do so at their peril—which is why this week sees the launch, by the British Association for the Advancement of Science of a "Declaration on Animals in Medical Research" signed by more than 800 doctors and scientists, defending the controlled use of animals.

The argument about how non-human animals should be treated is at root about how we as humans should behave. It is here that the biological discontinuities between humans and other animals become important. Our concern about how we treat other species springs out of our very humanness, as biologically and socially constructed creatures. We do not expect cats to debate the rights of mice. The issue is not really about animal rights at all, but about the *duties* that we have just because we are human.

And I am sure that we do have such duties, to behave kindly to other animals, with the minimum of violence and cruelty, not to damage or take their lives insofar as it can be avoided, just as we have duties to the planet's ecology in general. But those duties are limited by an overriding duty to other humans. I have a much-loved and exceedingly beautiful cat. But if I had to choose between saving her life and that of any human child, I would unhesitatingly choose the child. But I would save my cat at the expense of a fish. And so would the vast majority of people. That is species loyalty—speciesism if you like—and I am proud to be a speciesist.

Next week: the case against Professor Rose

FRINGE BENEFITS

Lutz's liberation

Colin Ward

Reputations travel far. That's how Wales came to be a liberation for Lutz. He grew up in a small town in Germany and sang his way as a boy through the endless list of Bach chorales and masses in the church choir. But what really excited him were the beautiful violins, violas and cellos that came in for the big performance on high days and holidays. He would watch from the choir-stalls the sensuous and sonorous shapes of the instruments.

He graduated from the shopfloor to become stand-in choirmaster, and his reputation spread. Would he conduct the Glee Club and the German equivalent of the Barber Shop Singers too? He had a way with singers, and the word got around. He was trapped.

Then he heard of the Welsh School of Musical Instrument Making at Abertridwr in one of those tight little south Wales valleys. Its home is an old primary school from the days when, as the Welsh say, the valleys were alive with children. In fact, it is a branch of the Ystrad Mynach College of Further Education. And the sad news is that it will close this summer as part of the country's cuts in its education budget.

Lutz was astounded by the fervent sound of those massed methodist choirs singing *Cym Rhondda*, and at the way everyone in the pub would, at the slightest provocation, burst into *Sospan Fach* and a lot of rugby songs he didn't understand. A choral group from Abertridwr that went to a German festival were told: "We sing from the head, but you Welsh sing from the heart."

He did his three-year course and went back home to make stringed instruments in a nice little workshop. "Just play it and see," he would say to visiting fiddlers. But to pay the rent he was lured back into the choral scene. "Things haven't been the same since you left," said the church folk, and that took up Sundays. The erudite *a cappella* gang were waiting for him to do "Schutz, Scheidt, Schein" and "Buxtehude" on Mondays. Tuesdays came the *kinderchor* and its parents, wanting a Eurovision-winning number for next year.

There was a blessed relief on Thursdays when he did violin repairs with natural glue, after Wednesday's gruelling session: Union Night celebrating the triumph of the proletariat with guitars. Friday was the hardest: when the Veteran's Association met, and he had to try hard to ensure that the old boys didn't burst out into the *Horstwessellied* as they stumbled home.

Saturday in the pub was an easy evening. Lutz was always there, as someone might have heard of the reputation of his fiddles and might even commission a cello. He couldn't help his choral reputation. It was just an albatross that pursued him everywhere. But if this was to be his fate, couldn't he suggest that, as he had learned that Abertridwr actually means "three streams meet here", might they not unite the rivulets of the town's choral music into one stream, and persuade everyone to change their holiday plans to a summer tour of south Wales.

It planned itself in his head. The church choir would do a Bach chorale, the Monday lot a Monteverdi madrigal, the children's choir would do *Y Deryn Pur*, all about the dove of peace, Wednesday's group would sing the *Internationale*, and Friday's old-timers would bring tears to everyone's eyes with an innocuous folksong about the Lorelei. Then they would all join together in a tribute to their hosts and sing *Cymru Fach* about that dear little country where Lutz had made all his friends. Why not meet at the *Musikverein* and talk about it next Thursday night?

Thursday came and Lutz realised what he had let himself in for. He had spent years getting off the choral treadmill, and here he was, inviting more. In his English language course, he had come across the lines of Auden that read: "Put the car away. When life fails,/ What is the point of going to Wales?" He sat there with the coffee heating up, but nobody came. The activists of each of his choirs saw him as their own particular wizard, and didn't want to get mixed up with the others.

What a relief for Lutz! He can go to Wales this summer with his load of fiddles and celebrate the demise of the Welsh School of Musical Instrument Making and Repair in his own way, and theirs.

NEW STATESMAN
SOCIETY

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What's left of the left?

Bryan Gould, Paul Foot, Sarah Benton, Edward Pearce and Bruce Anderson
kick over the traces

Stephen Howe
looks at the left in the east

Alexander Cockburn
looks at the left in the west

Ken Livingstone
looks at John Major

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PLUS: Betty Caplan on women playwrights; Geoff Dyer on Bob Dylan; Gilbert Adair on the death of the film buff; Rustom Irani on water wars in the Middle East

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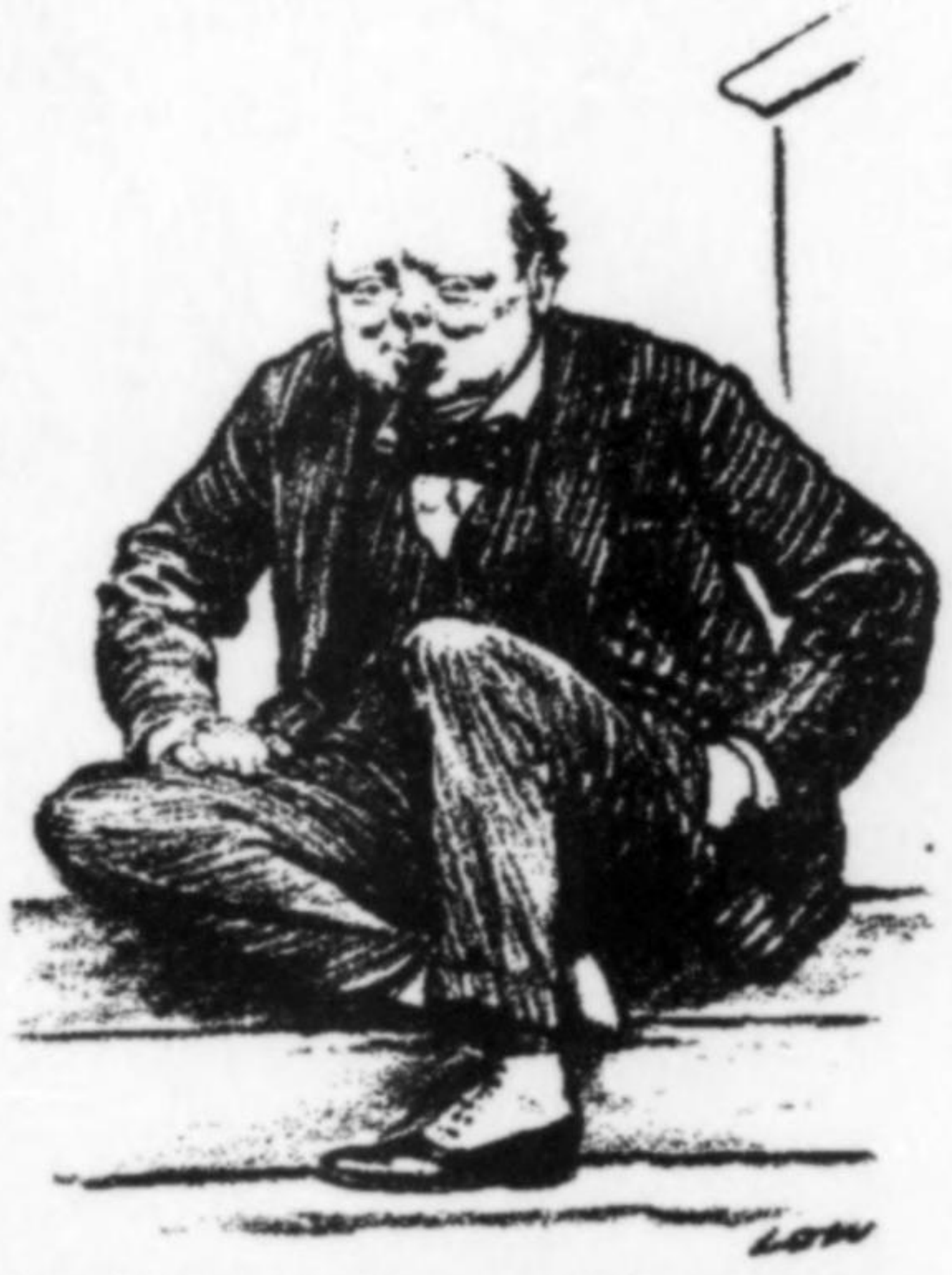

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Syria and Iraq have no right to the waters from the two rivers: "Why should they have any right to the waters of Turkey? Do we have the right to the petroleum of these downstream countries? The upstream people have the absolute right to use the water. The Turkish waters are not international waters."

Syria *is* receiving 500 cubic metres per second flow from Turkey. But the *quid pro quo* of this secret deal is that Syria has to stop supporting the Kurdistan Workers' Party (the PKK). Kamran Inan, Turkey's minister for the south-east region puts it discreetly: "It's a kind of gentleman's agreement, covering large areas, not only concerning water. You might understand that message by itself."

Some in Syria despair at how Turkey can dictate the quantity of water it releases. The director of the Tabqa dam, Shaker Bazoura'a, says: "We don't want a gift, we want our right to the river which is an historical right. We don't want 500 or 400 cubic metres because today they give us 500, but maybe it will be cut tomorrow." Early last year, Turkey did cut off the flow for a month, when it started to fill the lake behind the Ataturk dam.

Iraq, the third country through which the Euphrates flows, is also vulnerable, being dependent on the decision of both upstream countries. In 1975, when Syria was filling its own Tabqa dam, the Iraqis massed troops on the border and threatened to go to war against Syria.

Syria is constantly charged with double standards. As Suleyman Demirel of Turkey says: "If Syrians say that on the Yarmuk, they have the right as upstream people, and then when it comes to the Euphrates and Tigris, they try and say that the upstream people in Turkey don't have the right. That is a double standard."

Water is what is known as a zero-sum game. One party's gain is another's loss. Washington is flirting with two possible solutions. One is a 'Peace Pipeline', the brainchild of Turkey's President Ozal. This would involve one or two water pipes that would transfer water from Turkey's Seyhan and Ceyhan rivers across the Middle East and provide for all the countries in the region. But everyone knows this is pie in the sky, unless countries are willing to cooperate with each other. The other is a Middle East conference specifically to discuss water resources.

The Crown Prince of Jordan gives a maximum of a decade before any or all of the water problems flare up. "The water here is crucial. Unless by 2000 we have an agreement between states, then countries in the region will be forced into conflict. There's no two ways about it."

Rustom Irani was assistant producer on the BBC's three-part "Water Wars", which began transmission on 1 May. The second documentary, on the Middle East, is next Wednesday

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FRINGE BENEFITS

Moving on

Colin Ward

The man who remarked reflectively to Arthur Koestler, "Maybe I've been licking the wrong boots all these years" touched an important difference between our parents' or grandparents' generations and the contemporary world. They stayed put. We move on. It certainly applied to male jobs. The boy who was apprenticed at 14, or became an office boy in the bank or the town hall, retired 50 years later with a gold watch or chiming clock.

One in a thousand of them ever became managing director, branch manager or town clerk, something inconceivable nowadays, as a wholly different set of people enter as graduates and escalate through jobs. And if there are any long-term survivors in the lower ranks, we regard them not with admiration for their long and faithful service, but as examples of the Peter Principle: that people rise to their level of incompetence.

This was never a valid assumption. Ideas about work used to be different. At the county high school I attended, the English teacher was there for 38 years, the science teacher for 39 and the history teacher for 40—and they weren't duds, even if I was. Today, most children's careers in any particular school are longer than those of their teachers. And one of the many factors for demoralisation in that profession is the decline in the chances of spiralling up the career structure, so that, instead of moving on, they tend to move out altogether.

There has been a similar shift in local administration. Herbert Manzoni was for decades city engineer of Birmingham, with results once admired and now deplored. Henry Morris, father of the community college ideal, spent his entire working life as education officer for rural Cambridgeshire, admired for his indifference to professional advancement. Today, every level of public office, from ministers downward, is like a set of revolving doors, where the incumbent has just enough time to wave an encouraging greeting to his or her successor, as each goes off at a tangent pursuing a career.

No doubt we all deplore other people's lack of dedication, while determined ourselves to seize the chances that turn up, on the sound principle that you only live once. In the making of a slimmer, leaner, British industry in the 1980s, all those flexible and upwardly mobile careerists deplored the atavistic assumptions of the people sacked in droves from heavy engineering, shipbuilding, mining, metal-bashing and car-building, for imagining that they had a job for life.

I am sure that there's a skill, taught in business schools, of analysing not the handwriting, but the job records of applicants for work. John Wolfenden used to say that you should never stay more than ten years in one job: the first three learning it, the next four doing it and the last three getting ready to hand it on. But he, of course, was a Top Person. Suppose you are down at the bottom, implementing the latest switch in direction, the latest fashion in management ideology from the top. The truth is that, nowadays, some jobs are what the jargon calls a learning experience, while others make you feel that life has passed you by.

The golden rule is Never Go Back. If you stay any time in any workplace, you spend years making the experience tolerable for yourself. If you're then made redundant, the worst thing is to start the process again. I was talking to a man who worked for years at what was once Austin at Longbridge. The car industry would hire and fire the same people year after year as the market fluctuated. He'd become a cab-driver, used to making his own decisions. Then he went back to the body-plant. "I couldn't face it, as I'd been that way before," he explained. The key factor that everyone yearns for, whatever job they pick up, is the "span of autonomy", the extent to which you can make your own decisions. People used to create it. Now they have to move on to find it.

But the Scottish teacher Robert Mackenzie had the best tale about job expectations. When he was a boy in Aberdeenshire, the old train driver on his branch line was told that head office had decreed that drivers should retire at 70. "If I had thought it wasna to be a permanent job," he said, "I would never have ta'en it."

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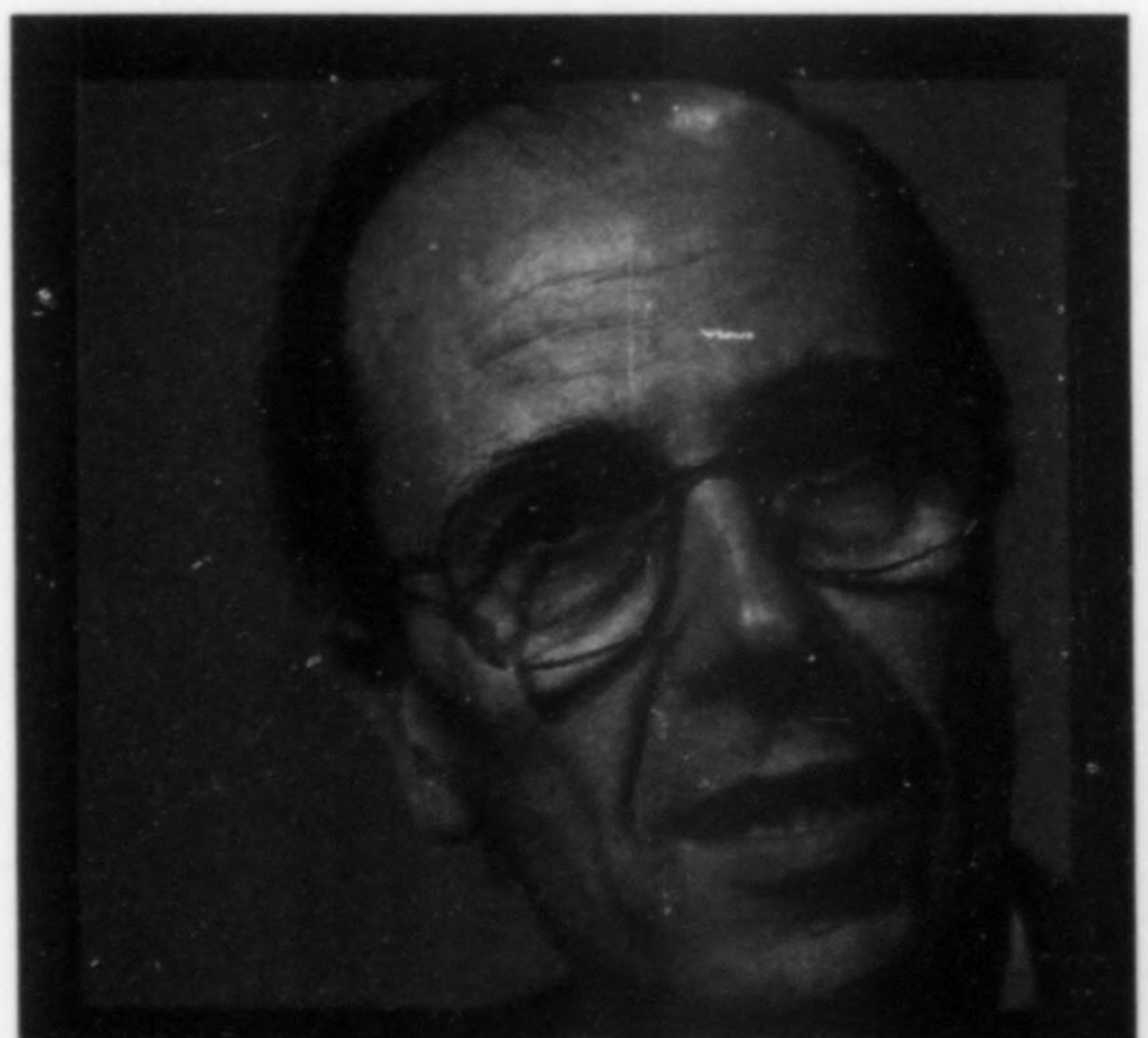

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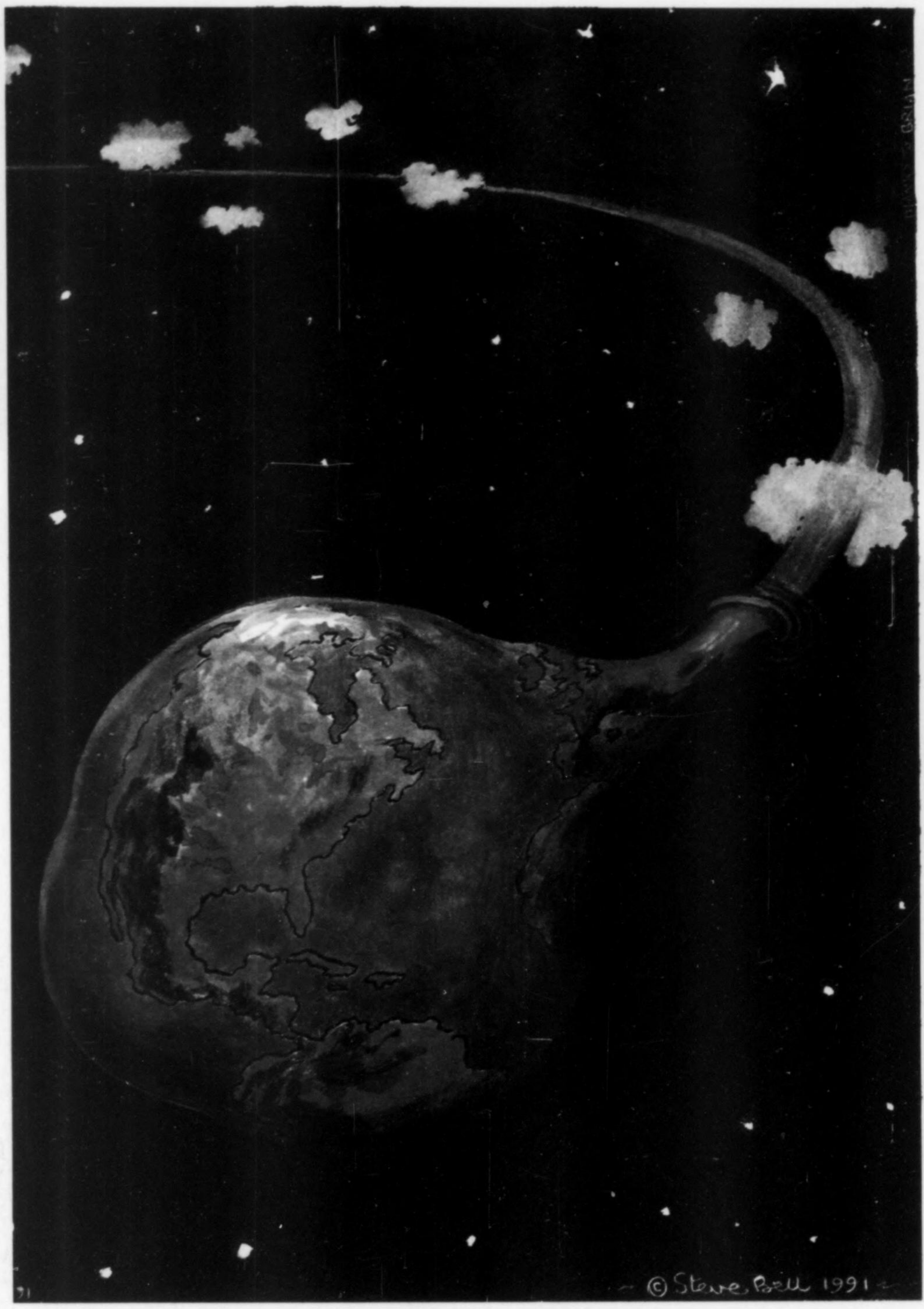

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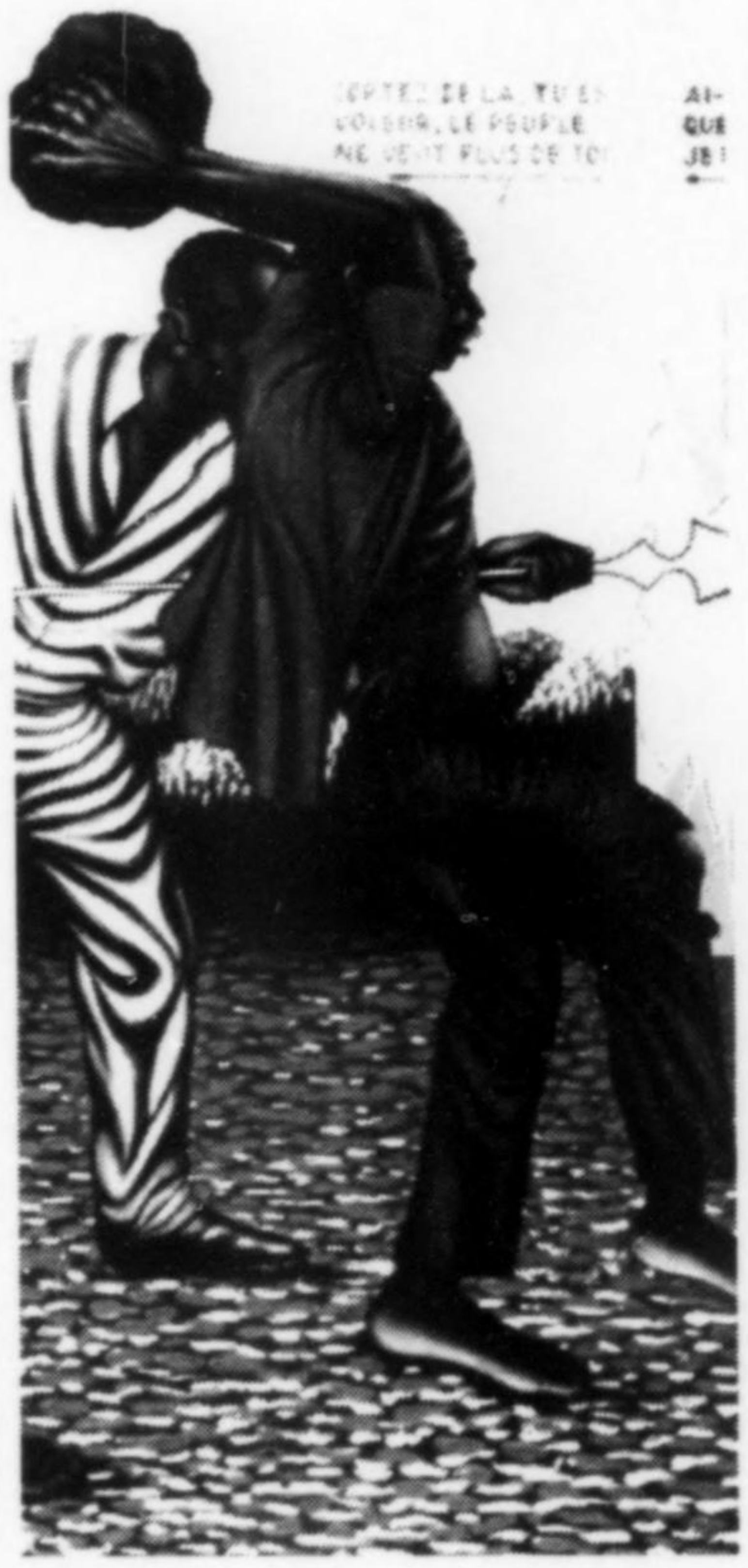

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FRINGE BENEFITS

I'm not Stiller

Colin Ward

We got to Zurich two days late for the funeral of its most celebrated citizen. Max Frisch had left instructions that no church or government should come near his corpse, and Swiss jokers told us that the two representatives of the ministry of culture in Kanton Zurich came two hours late so as not to offend the 699 remaining members of the 700-strong signatories of the manifesto of writers and artists called "Boycott the Snooper-State".

This was a reaction to the month's festival for the 700th anniversary of the "oath of comradeship" between the three original cantons. For, in 1989, the federal minister of justice, Mrs Kopp, had to resign in an atmosphere of financial scandal, and it was accidentally revealed that the secret police in Berne had files on a million citizens, including her. It brought the biggest demonstration ever seen in Switzerland, when 350,000 people assembled in Berne to condemn the federal council for betraying not only the people, but the very idea of direct democracy.

There was no constitutional basis for secret files, and a parliamentary inquiry resolved that people should be able to see them. About 380,000 people wrote to demand theirs. As in the US, they arrived with bits blacked out. Then the discovery that manipulation of photocopiers could reveal the words underneath obliged civil servants to use razor-blades to perforate the top copy and send off a second one.

The police file on Amnesty International's Swiss office began with seven blacked-out pages. A friend in Lausanne showed me her 18 pages (her mother has 36) and I noted the sheer trivia the unblacked entries revealed. If we had a Freedom of Information Act in Britain, you would find the same idiocy among *our* secret police. She had met Gabriel and Daniel Cohn-Bendit; she had received a family photograph from abroad. As the items were in various languages, we know that the cantonal, as well as the federal governments are involved, and they show that, as in Britain, personal post is opened. What strikes you is the complete unimportance of the carefully gathered information.

Frisch, who along with Brecht and Dürrenmatt (who died in December) was one of the big three German-language playwrights of the century, must have had a file 100 pages long. In his novel, *I'm not Stiller*, he recorded that his fellow-citizens were paralysed by fear: "Fear of the future, fear of one day being poor, fear of life, fear of having to die without life insurance, fear that the world could change: a panic-ridden fear of intellectual daring."

This fear was reflected in the official reaction to the anti-Snooper campaign: ignore nasty revelations and celebrate unity. Most Swiss are just bored, knowing that this means yodelling competitions and a thousand performances in town and village of Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*, an imported Scandinavian legend, and that anyway, Swiss unity dates from 1848, not 1291.

There are postcards, stamps and sugar-wrappers to celebrate the phoney anniversary, and members of the boycott committee have worked hard to undermine it. Frisch supported the subversives. Dürrenmatt declined, declaring that Switzerland should abolish itself in 1991 and recreate itself in 1992 on the principles that founded the country. That would be a *real* revolution. Another Zurich writer, Adolf Muschg, with a lengthy file, has just produced a book, *Switzerland on the Brink*, asking what will happen if the country he defines as a land of police surveillance, racism, defence paranoia and banking supremacy, joins the European Community.

I'm still a Switzophilian. I ruefully observe that the country's troubles are rooted in its governmental desire to be just like any other nation. I wish they'd stayed different. When did *you* last see your secret file, when did you have a chance to vote on whether *your* country needs an army, or on keeping the railway to every last uneconomic destination, or on using your phone bills to pay for rural buses, or on excluding lorries weighing over 28 tonnes from *your* country?

If our politics were brought out in the open, in the way that a tiny minority of Swiss citizens have exposed theirs, we'd all be rejoicing that dissidents are a lot more influential than governments.

Basically right

"It is . . . historically illiterate to believe that a safe future for all Kurds can be found in setting up a state for them," writes Gerald Kaufman ("Internal affairs", 26 April), a prospect he deems "unrealistic" anyway. Both points may be true, but a Kurdish state set up *by* the people of Kurdistan, rather than *for* them, is their basic inalienable right, which forms the basis for all future rights and freedoms.

The oppression of the Kurds is a national oppression. Thus their liberation, as that of the Palestinians, must necessarily be a national liberation. Anyone who doesn't understand this has questionable historical "literacy".

Since the twenties, the Kurds have played their part in both Turkish and Arab nationalist revolutions and in an Islamic revolution—all of which turned their guns on the Kurds. Whenever they've fought for their own national liberation, as in the socialist revolution in Russia in 1917 or the Kurdish nationalist revolution in Iranian Kurdistan in 1946, they've had their states or their gains destroyed by reactionary regimes. The imperialist powers and their puppets, the League of Nations and the United Nations, have been central to that denial and destruction—from the RAF bombing of Iraqi Kurds in the 1920s, to the gassing in Halabja and elsewhere by Saddam Hussein in 1988, using West German chemical weapons. Western "aid" to the Kurds is neither "precedent setting" nor "remarkable", as Mr Kaufman claims, but simply necessitated by the need to save the face of Bush, Major and, not unimportantly, Ozal of Turkey, a significant ally of the west.

The UN's role of protecting the imperial interests of some major power or other is always claimed by some short-sighted commentator or other as "precedent setting" and "remarkable", but it never is. If it, the United Nations, were to disentangle itself from the powers that dominate it, namely the US, the Soviet Union, China, Britain and France, and become an independent force for peace and justice, that would be truly "precedent setting" and "remarkable".

M Brown
Glasgow